inspiring

instructive

informative

interesting

365 Stories

Every day is a special day for a special story.

Part - 2

Maktabah Bait-ul-Ilm

Urdu Bazar, Karachi

inspiring, instructive, informative & interesting

365 Stories

Part - 2

Every day is a special day for a special story.

By Courtesy of:
Bait-ul-Ilm Trust

Published by:
Saeed Ahmed Welfare Trust

An Important Request

السلام علیکم ورحمۃ اللہ وبرکاتہ

To our respected readers

الحمدللہ, we have finally completed this book and we would like you all to know that we have tried our best to print this book with correct references and without errors so that whatever is stated is authentic and referenced. However, to err is human, and so, should you find any mistake, room for further improvement or if you have any suggestions or comments, please write to us about it so that we can make sure that the next print is error free. الحمدللہ, a lot of effort has gone into the editing and designing of this book and we hope that our readers will be happy with the result and pray for the acceptance of our endeavours.

جَزَاكَ اللّٰهُ خَيْرًا

Waiting for your precious suggestions,

A courtesy of:

Bait-ul-Ilm Trust

Published by:

Saeed Ahmed Welfare Trust

The Perfect Gift

السلام علیکم ورحمة الله وبرکاته

What is the best gift that a Muslim can give to another Muslim?

Do you know that the best gift to give to your Muslim brethren is knowledge about religious affairs? If you feel, after reading this book, that it can benefit your family, friends, business relations, schools, colleges and others; then send them this book. This will ensure:

1. That you will be practicing the hadith - "تهادوا تحابوا" which means - "Exchanging gifts will increase mutual love".
2. That you will be investing in your hereafter as well as dispensing your duty to your Muslim brethren.
3. That you will get the blessings of promoting knowledge and religious information.

Therefore, try to make this book available to as many people as you can. Send a copy to your local Masjid, library, clinic and school to fulfil your religious duty.

A Word From The Publisher

Dear Friends,

Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالٰى has informed us of the past nations, the good and the bad people. This has been done so that we know what is right and what is wrong, and this helps us be better people. The way good people lived and the blessings showered on them inspires us to do the same, while reading about the punishments on the sinners makes an intelligent person think and try to keep away from such deeds.

Therefore, reading about the incidents and stories from the lives of Prophets عليهم الصّلاة والسّلام and noble people influences us to perform good deeds. Hazrat Junaid Baghdadi رَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ تَعَالٰى said that stories are an army from the armies of Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالٰى and that through these, Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالٰى gives peace of heart and steadfastness on faith.

Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالٰى says,

> "We narrate to you all such stories from the events of the messengers as We strengthen your heart therewith." (Hud: 120)

Rasulullah ﷺ has stressed on the education and upbringing of children. A few Hadith say the following:-

1- Teach your sons swimming.

2- Teach your subordinates Surah Yousuf.

3- Teach your children to read Salaat when they are seven years old.

There are numerous other Ahadith as well as stories from the life of Rasulullah ﷺ.

That place great importance on the education and upbringing of children.

Alhamdulillah, the Baitul Ilm Trust has published many books in Urdu and English like the Zouqo-Shouq Series, Storytime and Bedtime Stories. And now, dear friends, another series is here with a total of 365 stories so that you have at least one story or interesting read to satisfy your appetite every day.

You will read in these stories about the greatness of Allah تبارك وتعالى, the love for Rasulullah ﷺ, good manners, respect of parents and elders, firmness and courage. This book has stories, facts, jokes and quotes. I am grateful to Hafiz Muhammad Ahsan and Brother Asim Bharoocha, and I request you all to remember me and them in your prayers.

Yours sincerely
Muhammad Hanif Abdul Majeed

CONTENT

Whizz at Mathematics

A group of 7 friends decided that they wanted to go to sightseeing and took a taxi back to their hotel.

The meter showed Rs. 28/-, so the taxi driver said, "You have to pay me Rs. 28/-."

They decided to share the cost among themselves, and so they divide the total (Rs. 28/-) by the number of people, i.e. 7.

This is how they did the calculation.

```
   ___
7 | 28   = 13          (7 x 1 = 7 & 7 x 3 = 21)
   -7
   ---
   21
  -21
   ---
    0
   ---
```

The driver was very pleased for receiving such a hefty amount and thought that the group was rich and gave him a big tip. Seeing this, the friends felt that they might have made a mistake.

They decide to ask their friend Bhoola. After all, the fellow was famous for his wisdom and wit.

They asked Bhoola to check their calculation of the taxi fare. Bhoola pondered over the calculations and finally said, "See, I am not good at division. The process just boggles me but the addition is something I am an expert at. Let us add all the amounts you guys gave to the taxi driver and check the result. This is how I do for those tax forms I get very often. The process is slow but is sure." The friends nodded their heads in appreciation.

Bhoola wrote as shown below and explained as he wrote on:

13
13
13
13
13
13
13
--
28
--

i.e. 3+3+3+3+3+3+ 3= 21 and 21+1+1+1+1+1+ 1+1=28 so this made sense.

He then said, "Yes, it's correct. However I can also call my close friend and accounting expert Goola.

Goola arrived, and when told of the problem, he replied that he did not think it was a bad deal but said, "No problem! I will verify it via mathematical computation. I'll verify it with multiplication. That is the best technique for this, you see!"

While others watch in admiration, Goola went on to write as shown:

13

x7

--- (7x3=21 & 7x1=7 so 21+7=28)

21

+7

--

28

This seemed out as well.

Then he said, "This is really fine. There should be no problem, Bhoola. After all, it is correct in all the methods."

King's Dream

Once a king had a dream wherein he observed a very large tray containing many varieties, of flowers in many shapes and sizes. Suddenly a knife appeared from above and cut these flowers; it destroyed both large and small flowers.

At this point the king awoke and began to ponder upon the meaning of this strange dream. He related it to his Court Mu'abbirs (interpreters) but they all dismissed it as a product of his mind's imagination. Unconvinced and worried, the king ordered that no cooking would take place in the kingdom until this dream was interpreted!

Coincidentally, a soldier returned home on leave... and asked for food. His mother replied, "Dear, there has been no food cooked for three days. It is the king's command. Police patrols are going around, any sign of cooking smoke and we will be instantly arrested!"

Her son replied, "Well I do not care what great dream the king is supposed to have seen, I am starving, please cook me a meal. If the smoke gets noticed and the king summons me, we shall go there and see what happens."

Accordingly, the mother lit her stove and began cooking. Noticing smoke arising from the chimney, the royal spies arrived and arrested the soldier and took him into the king's presence who asked, "Why did you commit this disobedience?"

The soldier replied, "I am starving... anyway please relate your dream." The king described his dream.

"Allow me to eat and a three day grace period...if by then I do not bring an interpretation you may punish me with eath." commented the soldier and the king readily agreed.

After having eaten, the soldier mounted his horse and roamed from city to city, town-to-town in trying to find an interpretation...but to no avail.

Fatigued, he stopped at a small hamlet to request a drink of water from a young maiden spinning cloth in her porch. The pious, veiled lady brought a pitcher of water and left it by the gateway. Puzzled, the soldier dismounted and drank the water. Then he asked, "Madam you appear to be alone, where is your mother?"

The young lady answered from inside her porch, "My mother has gone to deliver two from one!"

Dumbfounded, the soldier thought, "Oh great! As if one dream to interpret wasn't enough...what does she mean by delivering two from one?"

Thereafter he asked, "Well, where is your father?"

The young lady replied, "My father has gone to enjoin clay with clay."

Just then the father appeared and the soldier commented, "Your daughter is amazing, I asked her two simple questions and she gave such strange replies!"

Father: What did she say?

Soldier: Well, first I asked her for a drink of water and she left some at the gateway.

Father: My daughter is shy and very modest. How could she possibly hand something to a stranger?

Soldier: Secondly, I asked her, "Where is your mother?" She replied, "She has gone to deliver two from one!"

Father: Yes, my wife is a midwife, she was called to deliver a baby, and this is what she meant by delivering two from one!

At this point, the soldier began to think, "Hold on, we appear to have something very special here..."

Soldier: Thereafter, I asked her about you and she replied, "My father has gone to enjoin clay with clay."

Father: A local has passed away and I had gone to attend his funeral, anyhow who are you and where have you come from?

The soldier related his whole predicament of interpreting the king's dream within 3 days or to face the death penalty, and the king's command forbidding any cooking in the kingdom.

Addressing his daughter, the father asked, "Dear, did you hear the dream?"

"Yes father I heard."

"Well, what do you say?"

"It is the king's dream. I wish to hear it directly from him before giving the interpretation."

Accordingly, all three left for the king's palace...

Soldier asked the king, "Your Majesty, the girl who is to interpret your dream has arrived, please give a command allowing all your subjects to cook...should you find the meaning not to your liking, your majesty is king and may do as he wishes!"

A royal proclamation was given allowing people to cook again. Thereafter, when all had eaten, the young lady arrived and from behind a screen listened to the king's dream and then commented...

"The interpretation of this dream is as follows. The tray refers to earth, whilst its covering is the Heavens, the flowers therein are people and the knife represents death...which travels upon earth; "cutting" some people in young age whilst others in later life. Some die in childhood, others in their teens, middle and old age. This knife keeps appearing and taking the souls of creation. Herein Allah Ta'ala is warning you that it is not wise for Insaan (man) to remain ignorant of death, because it may appear at any time in life. These are the meanings of the tray, flowers and knife!"

The king was overjoyed on hearing this interpretation and showered gifts as a sign of his appreciation. Now dear kids! We all should take heed of the king's dream and be ready for all sorts of situation by keeping our hands clean. Yes, we should wash our hands and also keep our hands clean off sins and misdeeds. If Allah Ta'ala is happy with us the knife of death will cause us no harm but only good, but if it is otherwise the knife will treat us terribly.

Mother's Damp Love

After having reached the height of his career, a man felt his duty to repay his mother back for all that she had done for him.

He asked, "Mother, what can I give you? What can I do for you? I sincerely wish to repay you for the sacrifices you have made for me and for all the love you have showered upon me."

Mother looked surprised and said, "Why do you think about it? It was my duty so I did it, you don't have to repay me. Even if you want to, there is no way a man can ever repay his mother."

Despite her continuous refusal to ask for anything, the son persisted. To put an end to the discussion, she said, "All right, if you must, then tonight you sleep on my bed, with me, just as, you used to, when you were a baby."

He said, "That's a strange thing to ask for, but if it pleases you, I will."

As soon as he fell asleep, the mother got up and brought a bucket of water. She poured a mug full of water on his side. Feeling disturbed by the wetness under him, in his sleep he moved away to the other side of the bed. As he settled down, his mother poured another mug of water on the other side. In his slumber, he tried to find space towards the foot post of the bed.

Sometime later, he woke up feeling that this part of the bed too was damp. He got up and saw his mother, with the mug in her hand. He asked angrily, "What are you doing mother? Why don't you let me sleep? How do you expect me to sleep on a wet bed?"

Mother said, "I slept with you, when you used to wet the bed in the night. I would change your diaper and move you to the dry part of the bed, while I slept on the wet side. You wanted to repay me. Can you sleep here even for one night with me on a damp bed? If you can, I'll take it that you have repaid me."

Think......

A group of alumni, highly established in their careers, got together to visit their old university lecturer. Conversation soon turned into complaints about stress in work and life. Offering his guests coffee, the lecturer went to the kitchen and returned with a large pot of coffee and an assortment of cups: porcelain, plastic, glass, some plain-looking and some expensive and exquisite, telling them to help themselves to hot coffee.

When all the students had a cup of coffee in hand, the lecturer said: "If you noticed, all the nice-looking, expensive cups were taken up, leaving behind the plain and cheap ones. While it is but normal for you to want only the best for yourselves, that is the source of your problems and stress. What all of you really wanted was coffee, not the cup, but you consciously went for better cups and are eyeing each other's cups. Now, if life is coffee, then the jobs, money and position in society are the cups. They are just tools to hold and contain life, but the quality of life doesn't change. Sometimes, by concentrating only on the cup, we fail to enjoy the coffee in it." So don't let the cups drive you...enjoy the coffee instead.

You Are...

You are strong...

when you take your grief and teach it to smile.

You are brave...

when you overcome your fear and help others to do the same.

You are happy...

when you see a flower and are thankful for the blessing.

You are loving...

when your own pain does not blind you to the pain of others.

You are wise...

when you know the limits of your wisdom.

You are true...

when you admit there are times you fool yourself.

You are alive...

when tomorrows' hope means more to you than yesterday's mistake.

You are free...

when you control yourself and do not wish to control others.

You are honourable...

when you find it an honour in honouring others.

You are generous...

when you can give as sweetly as you can take.

You are humble...

when you do not know how humble you are.

You are thoughtful...

when you see others just as they are and treat them just as yourself.

You are merciful...

when you forgive in others the faults you condemn in yourself.

You are rich...

when you never need more than what you have.

You are you...

when you are at peace with whom you are not...

Say This - - -

When...	Say...
* You meet a Muslim	اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ *Peace be upon you*
*A Muslim greets you	وَعَلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامُ *And peace be upon you*
*You meet a Muslim	اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ *Peace and mercy and blessings of* Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ *be upon you*
*A Muslim greets you	وَعَلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامُ وَرَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ *And peace and mercy and blessings of* Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ *be upon you*
*You begin something	بِسْمِ اللهِ *In the name of* Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ
*You thank someone	جَزَاكَ اللهُ خَيْرًا May Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ *give you good reward*
*Someone thanks you	بَارَكَ اللهُ فِيْكُمْ May Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ *bless you*
*You say good-bye	فِيْ اَمَانِ اللهِ May Allah *protect you*

*Praising something	سُبْحَانَ اللهِ *Glory be to* Allah تبارك وتعالى
*Expressing a desire to do something	اِنْ شَآءَ اللهُ *If* Allah تبارك وتعالى *wishes*
*Repenting for sins before Allah تبارك وتعالى	اَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ *I beg* Allah تبارك وتعالى *for forgiveness*
*Expressing appreciation of something good	مَاشَآءَ اللهُ *As* Allah تبارك وتعالى *has willed*
*You sneez or showing gratitude to Allah تبارك وتعالى after success or after completing anything	اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ *Praise be to* Allah تبارك وتعالى
*Ending a dua or prayer	آمِيْن *May it be so*
*The name of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is mentioned	صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمْ *Peace be upon him* (ﷺ)
*The name of any Prophet is mentioned	عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ *Peace be upon him* (عليه الصلاة والسلام)
*Saying the name of a male companion of the Prophet (Sahabi)	رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ May Allah تبارك وتعالى be pleased with him (رضي الله تعالى عنه)

*Saying the name of a female companion of the Prophet(Sahabiya)	رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا May Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ be pleased with her (رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَىٰ عَنْهُمْ)
*Collectively saying the names of companions of the Prophet	رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ May Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ be pleased with them all (رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَىٰ عَنْهُمْ)
*You hear the news of some loss or some one's death	إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُوْن To Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ we belong and to Him is our return
*You are faced with troubles or wants to maintain a blessing	لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللّٰه There is no strength nor power except Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ
*Someone else sneezes	يَرْحَمُكَ الله May Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ have mercy on You
*Giving charity	فِيْ سَبِيْلِ الله For the sake of Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ

Interesting Facts about Technology

Windmill

The windmill originated in Iran in AD 644. It was used to grind grain.

Compact Discs

Compact discs read from the inside to the outside edge.

Computers

ENIAC, the first electronic computer that appeared 60 years ago in 1946. The original ENIAC was about 80 feet long, weighed 30 tons and had 17,000 tubes. By comparison, a desktop computer today can store a million times more information than an ENIAC, and 50,000 times faster.

From the smallest microprocessor to the biggest mainframe, an average American depends on over 264 computers per day.

The first modern computer (i.e., general-purpose and program-controlled) was built in 1941 by Konrad Zuse. Since there was a war going on, he applied to the German government for funding to build his machines for military use, but was turned down because the Germans did not expect the war to last beyond Christmas.

The computer was launched in 1943, more than 100 years after Charles Babbage designed the first programmable device. Babbage dropped his idea after he couldn't raise capital for it. In 1998, the Science Museum in London, UK, built a working replica of the Babbage machine, using the materials and work methods available at Babbage's time. It worked just as Babbage had intended.

E-Mail

The first e-mail was sent over the Internet in 1972.

Silicon Chip

A chip of silicon, a quarter-inch square has the capacity of the original 1949 ENIAC computer, which occupied a city block.

Mobile (Cellular) Phones

As much as 80% of microwaves from mobile phones are absorbed by your head.

Smile Only! (Part 1)

The Slap

Nasruddin Hodja was standing in the marketplace when a stranger stepped up to him and slapped him in the face, but then said, "I beg your pardon. I thought that you were someone else." This explanation did not satisfy Hodja, so he brought the stranger before the qadi and demanded compensation. The Hodja soon perceived that the qadi and the defendant were friends. The stranger admitted his guilt, and the judge announced the sentence, "The settlement for this offense is one piaster, to be paid to the plaintiff. If you do not have a piaster with you, then you may bring it here to the plaintiff at your convenience." Hearing this sentence, the defendant went on his way. Hodja waited for him to return with the piaster. And he waited. And he waited. Some time later Hodja said to the qadi, "Do I understand correctly that one piaster is sufficient payment for a slap?"

"Yes," answered the qadi. Hearing this answer, the Hodja slapped the judge in the face and said, "You may keep my piaster when the defendant returns with it," then walked away.

....

Who's the idiot?

Nasruddin used to stand in the street of market, to be pointed out as an idiot. No matter how often people offered him a large and a small coin, he always chose the smaller piece. One day a kind man said to him, "Nasruddin, you should take the bigger coin. Then you will have more money and people will no longer be able to make a laughing stock of you."

"That may be true," said Nasruddin, "but if I always take the larger one, people will stop offering me money to prove that I am more idiotic than they are. Then I would have no money at all."

....

Groceries

An old Muslim woman lived next door to an atheist. Every day she had stood on her front porch and cried, "Subhanallah! Alhamdulillah! Oh Allah! تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ I believe in You!" and the athiest would look out his window and say, "There is no Allah! There is no God! You're wasting your time, old woman!" She would crooked her nose and walked into her house.This went on for years.

One day she came out and cried, "Subhanallah! Alhamdulillah! Oh Allah! تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ I have no money for food this week, but I believe in You! I know You'll give me my provisions!" Upon hearing this, the atheist made an evil plan.The next day the woman found four large bags of groceries on her front porch. She took them inside and came out again and cried out, "Subhanallah! Alhamdulillah! Oh Allah! I had no money for food this week, but I believed in You and You answered my prayers! Allahu Akbar!!"

The atheist jumped from behind the bushes and said, "Aha! Allah didn't put those groceries there! I did! That proves there's no Allah!"The old woman said, "Alhamdulillah! Oh Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ, I truly believe in You! Not only did you give me my provisions for the week, but you made Shaitan pay for it!"

Smile Only! (Part 2)

Clothes and judgement

One day Nasruddin went to a banquet. As he was dressed rather shabbily, no one let him in. So he ran home, put on his best robe and fur coat and returned. Immediately, the host came over, greeted him and ushered him to the head of an elaborate banquet table. When the food was served, Nasruddin took some soup with spoon and pushed it to his fur coat and said, "Eat my fur coat, eat! It's obvious that you're the real guest of honour today, not me."

....

Marriage

A student of Nasruddin asked him," How much does it cost to get married?"

Nasruddin replied "I don't know, I'm still paying for it."

"Is it true? I heard that in China, a man doesn't know his wife until he marries her," his other student asked.

"That happens everywhere, son, EVERYWHERE!"

....

Age versus height

A ram, an ox and a camel were walking through the desert together when they came across a large green turf of grass growing out of the sand. The ram stated, "I should get this turf of grass for I am the oldest, as I was in the field with the ram that Ibrahim sacrificed instead of his oldest child."

The ox replied, "Nay then I am the oldest, for after Adam عليه السلام was expelled from the garden, I pulled his plough in the first field he cultivated."

The camel horrified at how his companions were lying, stated, "Age is not a good criteria for who should get it, height is." and with that leaned over and ate the grass.

A tale of Tails (Part1)

There are many animals that have tails. There are many varieties of tails. You must have seen many of them. Well here is a tale about tails.

In a jungle all the animals had gathered for an important meeting. The problem was that they only had one old lion in the whole jungle, and some hunters had taken him away too. The jungle was without any king.

All the animals had gathered to reach an agreement on who should be the king.

The owl started speaking from the high tree, "My respected fellow creatures, welcome to the meeting. It is a very sad thing that we are left without a king. However, we are also very happy because the old king was too old to rule and look after the state of affairs. Anyway, the lion dynasty was very cruel to jungle folks and finally we have got rid of them. Now we need to appoint a new king. The new king must look after the jungle's affairs and keep a watchful eye."

Then came the turn of, the wise monkey. He shrilled from the same high tree, "The wise animal council of the jungle, which comprises our very own owl and yours truly, have unanimously decided that since almost all animals have tails, the animals with the best tail will choose from amongst themselves the new king. Each community will put forth its case. We, the wise animal council will decide."

There were cheers and applause from all the animals, which resulted in a loud noise.

Then all the animals chose their respective candidates for nominating the king.

First the birds chose the peacock for its beautiful tail (beauty lies in the eye of the beholder!).

The small animals' rights activists chose the mouse (the most mischievous!).

Big animals chose the joint candidates, the elephant and the giraffe for their small tails (small words, big deeds!).

Insects chose the scorpion (size doesn't matter!).

The dangerous animals chose the crocodile (the most dangerous tail ender!).

The harmless animals chose the cow (the bigger the better!).

Flying insects chose the honeybee (stings like a bee!).

The crawlers chose the snake (all tails no brains!).

The active animals chose the donkey and the dog as joint candidates (crooked tails!).

There were many other contestants also.

Finally after everyone had put their case forward, the council of wise animals decided, "We have heard all the cases. It is very hard to decide and give our judgement right away. So we will start individual proceedings."

After a few months without any king of the jungle, the council of wise animals called the collective meeting once again.

A tale of Tails (Part 2)

The owl announced the unanimous verdict of himself and the monkey.

"We, the council of wise animals have unanimously decided that there will be no king in the jungle anymore. From now on there will be democracy. There will be a parliament of wild and tame animals. All the members of the parliament will debate each issue, and the head of the parliament will take the final decision. We, the council of wise animals, will be the united head of the parliament and the jungle. From now on there will be new jungle rules. The details will be announced in the next meeting."

Everyone was content, but they wanted to know the details. So they all waited for the next meeting.

The next session was then held on the first day of the first week of the next month. This time it was the monkey. who spoke about the details. Here is what he said:

The details are as follows:

The beautification of our jungle will be taken care of by the birds under the leadership of the peacocks.

The small animals will take care of cleaning the dirt, under the able leadership of the mouse.

The big animals will take care of justice and peace under the able leadership of the giraffe and the white elephant.

Insects will take care of themselves under the able leadership of the scorpions.

The dangerous animals will be the army under the able command of the crocodile.

The harmless tame animals will be the working-class, under the able leadership of the cows.

Flying insects and crawlers will be the police under the joint leadership of the honeybees and the snakes.

The active animals will do the news reporting under the able leadership of the donkeys.

Everybody was happy and cheered.

For some time in the beginning everyone was happy.

The birds took a lot of interest in beautifying the jungle.

The small animals cleaned the jungle better than it ever was.

Big animals were very good at justice.

The scorpion was very nice to other insects.

The working-class was working very hard and was successful in increasing the growth of plants, trees and fruits.

The bees and the crawlers were performing a great duty as the police force.

The dangerous animals proved themselves strong in defending the jungle. They repulsed all attacks by the hunters.

The active animals were acting wisely in their news reporting.

A tale of Tails (Part 3)

But things took a bad turn.

The birds, instead of beautifying the jungle started eating all the seeds and destroyed the flowers.

The small animals, instead of cleaning started to make more mess.

The big animals, instead of providing justice themselves started injustices. The white elephant did nothing.

The scorpions started killing other insects.

The working-class worked day and night, but the cows ate whatever the others grew.

The honeybees and crawlers, instead of policing, started stinging and poisoning other animals.

The donkeys and other active animals would start braying whatever they heard without verifying and so they spread rumours and played into others' hands.

All of these problems made the lives of animals a living hell.

The parliament of wild and tame animals sat and debated on all of these issues. They could not agree on any means of ending the lawlessness. The council of wise animals of the jungle (monkey and owl) dictated whatever they found best, and used the dogs for fulfilling their wishes.

Finally, there was too much chaos. The dangerous animals came into play and took over the democratic jungle rule. Everyone was happy, but the dangerous animals, instead of protecting the jungle started to tease the other animals and did whatever was good only for them.

Now slowly all the animals realised that the jungle could not be ruled in this way. They now knew that only a strong ruler like a lion could run the affairs of the jungle. Everybody wanted this, but did not speak out. So all of them secretly visited the lions of another jungle, without telling each other, and invited them to rule over their jungle.

So, one day it happened. The lions of the neighbouring jungle sent their best lion and lioness. They immediately took over their government, as no one wanted to resist. They did not resist because they themselves had invited them secretly.

And once again the jungle was ruled in a way that was best for it.

We must not seek to do things the way we enjoy but we should do things the way Allah تبارك وتعالى tells us, this way the world will be a peaceful place. Otherwise, the world will fill with problems and restlessness.

Lots of Questions (Part 1)

One day Hazrat Bayazid Bastami رحمۃ اللہ تعالٰی while in meditation saw himself in a synagogue dressed as a Jew. At first he was confused, but when he kept on seeing the same vision over and over again, he decided to enact it. So, he dressed himself as a Jew and went to their synagogue.

The Jews and their scholars were present; their chief Rabbi stood up to speak. But when he stood up, his tongue became stuck and he could not talk. After he had been standing quietly for some time, the Jews started to complain. The Rabbi said, "In this gathering there is a follower of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and I cannot speak because he has come to examine us."

On hearing this, their anger raged like wildfire and they asked the Rabbi to give them permission to kill this follower of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The Rabbi replied, "He cannot be killed without proof, so we must talk to him peacefully and respectfully and then we can decide."

The Rabbi then said, "Oh follower of Muhammad ﷺ. For the sake of your Prophet please stand up in your place. If you can remove our doubt about Islam then we shall accept Islam, but if you can't, then we shall kill you." On hearing this, Hazrat Bayazid 1 stood up and gave permission for them to question him.

Rabbi: What is one and not two?

Bayazid: Allah تبارک وتعالٰی.

Rabbi: What is two and not three?

Bayazid: Night and day.

"We have made the night and the day two signs."

(Qur'aan chapter 17, verse 12)

Rabbi: What is three and not four?

Bayazid: The Throne, Chair, and the Pen of Allah تبارك وتعالى.

Rabbi: What is four and not five?

Bayazid: The Torah, Bible, Psalms, and the Qur'aan.

Rabbi: What is five and not six?

Bayazid: The five compulsory Prayers.

Rabbi: What is six and not seven?

Bayazid: The six days in which the Earth, the sky, and whatever is in between them was created.

"We created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six days, and no weariness even touched Us."(Qur'aan chapter 50, verse 38)

Rabbi: What is seven and not eight?

Bayazid: The seven skies.

"Who has created the seven skies, one over the other."

(Qur'aan chapter 67, verse 3)

Rabbi: What is eight and not nine?

Bayazid: The bearers of the throne of Allah تبارك وتعالى.

"And on that Day, the Throne of your Lord will be carried above them by eight (angels)."(Qur'aan chapter 69, verse 17)

Rabbi: What is nine and not ten?

Bayazid: Nine mischievous persons of the nation of Hazrat Saleh عليه الصلاة والسلام in which the mongers lived.

"And there were nine persons in the city who used to make mischief on the earth and did not put things right."(Qur'aan chapter 27, verse 48)

Rabbi: What is ten and not eleven?

Bayazid: The person who performs a minor pilgrimage along with the major one and doesn't have the capacity to sacrifice an animal, he has to keep ten fasts.

"Whoever avails the advantage of the 'Umra along with the Hajj shall make an offering of whatever animal is available. However, any one who finds none shall fast for three days during Hajj, and for seven days when you return; thus they are ten in all." (Qur'aan chapter 2, verse 196)

Rabbi: What are the eleven, twelve and thirteen things which Allah تبارك وتعالى has mentioned?

Bayazid: Hazrat Yusuf عليه الصلاة والسلام had eleven brothers.

The twelve months in a year.

"Surely the number of months according to Allah تبارك وتعالى is twelve (as written) in the book of Allah تبارك وتعالى on the day He created the heavens and the earth." (Qur'aan chapter 9, verse 36)

Hazrat Yusuf عليه الصلاة والسلام saw thirteen things prostrating to him.

"(It happened) when Yusuf said to his father, :My father, I saw (in dream) eleven stars and the Sun and the Moon; I saw them all fallen prostrate before me." (Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 4)

Lots of Questions (Part 2)

More questions came up.......

Rabbi: Which is that nation which lied and went in to paradise and which is that nation which said the truth and entered hell?

Bayazid: Hazrat Yusuf's عليه السلام brothers lied but they went to paradise

"They said: Father, we went racing with one another, and left Yusuf with our belongings, and the wolf ate him up. You will never believe us, howsoever truthful we may be." (Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 17)

The contradiction between the Christians and the Jews was true but they went to hell.

"The Jews say: The Christians have nothing to stand on and the Christians say: The Jews have nothing to stand on while they both read the Book!" (Qur'aan chapter 2, verse 113)

Rabbi: What is the meaning of:

"By those that scatter dust, then those that bear load then those that float with ease, and those who distribute by command."

(Qur'aan chapter 51, verse 1-4)

Bayazid: The meaning of those that scatter dust is air, the meaning of those that bear load is water filled clouds, the meaning of those that float with ease is boats, and the meaning of the last is the angels which distribute the sustenance.

Rabbi: What is that thing which has no soul, nor any connection with breathing, yet it breathes?

Bayazid: It is the dawn, for it has no soul but it still breathes.

"And the morning when it starts breathing."(Qur'aan Chapter 81, verse 18)

Rabbi: What are those fourteen things with which Allah تبارك وتعالى talked with honour?

Bayazid: The seven earths and the seven skies.

"Then He turned straight to the sky, while it was a smoke, and said to it and to the earth, Come (to My obedience), both of you, willingly or unwillingly. Both said: We come willingly." (Qur'aan chapter 41, verse 11)

Rabbi: Which is that grave which moves the person in it around?

Bayazid: The fish of Hazrat Yunus عليه السلام.

"Then the fish swallowed him while he was reproaching his own self."
(Qur'aan chapter 37, verse 142)

Rabbi: Which is that water which neither came up from the earth nor down from the sky?

Bayazid: The water which Hazrat Sulaiman عليه السلام sent to Bilqis, Queen of Sheeba, for it was the sweat of a horse.

Rabbi: What are those four things which had no father nor were born from a mother's stomach?

Bayazid: The sheep of Hazrat Ismail عليه السلام, the she camel of Hazrat Salih عليه السلام, Hazrat Adam عليه السلام and our mother Hawwa عليها السلام (Eve).

Rabbi: Whose blood flowed first on the Earth?

Bayazid: It was Habil's (Abel) when Qabil (Cain) killed him.

Rabbi: What is that thing which Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ created and then bought?

Bayazid: A believer's soul.

"Surely, Allah has bought their lives and their wealth from the believers, in exchange of (a promise) that Paradise shall be theirs."

(Qur'aan chapter 9, verse 111)

Rabbi: What is that voice which Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ created and does not like it?

Bayazid: The donkey's voice.

"Surely, the ugliest of voices is the voice of the donkeys."

(Qur'aan chapter 31, verse 19)

Rabbi: What is that creation that Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ allows but despises?

Bayazid: Women's schemes.

"Great is the trickery of you women indeed."

(Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 28)

Rabbi: What is that thing that Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ created and then asked about?

Bayazid: The staff of Hazrat Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام.

"And what is that in your right hand, O Musa? He said: It is my staff. I lean on it, and I beat down leaves with it for my sheep, and I have many other uses for it." (Qur'aan chapter 20, verse 17)

Rabbi: Who are the most pious of the women and which are the blessed rivers?

Bayazid: The most pious women are Hazrat Aasiyah, Hazrat Khadija, Hazart Aisha and Hazrat Fatima رضي الله تعالى عنهن.

The most blessed rivers are the Oxus, Simwon, Tigris, Euphrates and Nile.

Rabbi: Which are the most blessed mountain and the most blessed animal?

Bayazid: Mount Toor in Makkah and the horse.

Rabbi: Which is the best month and which night is the best of all nights?

Bayazid: The month of Ramadan and the Night of Qadr.

"The month of Ramadan is the one in which the Qur'aan was revealed as guidance for mankind, and as clear signs that show the right way and distinguish between right and wrong."(Qur'aan chapter 2, verse 185)

"The Night of Qadr is much better than one thousand months."

(Qur'aan chapter 97, verse 3)

Rabbi: There is a tree which has twelve twigs, each twig has thirty leaves, and each leaf has five fruits, two in the sun and three in the shade. What is the meaning of this tree?

Bayazid: The tree means one year, the twigs mean the twelve months, the leaves represent the thirty days, and the fruits are the daily prayers, two of which are prayed in the day and the remaining three which are prayed at dawn, at dusk, and in the night time.

Rabbi: What is that thing that circled around the Ka'abah in Makkah even though it had no soul?

Bayazid: The boat of Hazrat Nuh alayhi salaam. In the time of the flood it arrived in Arabia and circled around the Ka'abah.

Rabbi: How many Prophets did Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ send as Messengers?

Bayazid: Only Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ knows, but in it is said that Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ sent 124,000 Prophets out of whom 313 were Messengers.

Rabbi: What are those four things whose roots are one but their colours and tastes are different?

Bayazid: Eyes, ears, mouth and nose.

The wetness of the eye is sour, the wetness of the ears is acidic, that of the nose is also acidic and the wetness of the mouth is sweet.

Rabbi: What is that thing which Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ sent revelation on, but it was nor human nor Jinn neither Angel?

Bayazid: The honey bee.

"Your Lord revealed to the honeybee: Make homes in the mountains, in the trees and in the structures they raise."(Qur'aan chapter 16, verse 68)

After this the Rabbi couldn't ask any more questions and became quiet.

Hazrat Bayazid رَحِمَهُ اللّٰهُ تَعَالَىٰ said, "Now you give me the answer to my one question. What is the key to paradise?"

The Rabbi replied, "If I give the answer to this question, this gathering will kill me."

The gathering shouted in one voice "We shail not do anything. Now tell us the true answer!"

The Rabbi then said, "Listen! The key to paradise is to witness:

There is no God worthy of worship except Allah تبارك وتعالى and Muhammad ﷺ is His last messenger!"

On hearing this, the whole gathering accepted Islam and Hazrat Bayazid رحمه الله تعالى returned, thanking Allah تبارك وتعالى.

Short Stories (Part 1)

Reflection of inner self

Mahmud was a very pious man, but he was not very attractive. One day, he was walking along the road, minding his own business, when a lady came up to him, and started calling him names and abusing him. This lady kept saying all kinds of nasty things, and Mahmud just listened to her patiently. Finally, when she had finished calling him names and abusing him, Mahmud greeted her, smiled, and said, "And a nice day to you," and continued on his way.

Why did Mahmud, the pious man, behave this way?

It is because he knew that everything she said was just a reflection of her own inner self.

If you use bad language, you are just making obvious to everybody how far away you really are from Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ since your words are in reality a reflection of your own inner self.

10 Dollars

A man came home from work late, tired and irritated, to find his 5-year-old son waiting for him at the door.

"Daddy, may I ask you a question?"

"Yes, sure, what is it?" replied the man.

"Daddy, how much money do you make an hour?"

"That's none of your business! What makes you ask such a thing?" the man said angrily.

"I just want to know. Please tell me, how much you make an hour?" pleaded the little boy.

"Okay, I make $20.00 an hour."

"Oh," the little boy replied, head bowed. Looking up, he said, "Daddy, may I borrow $10.00 please?"

The father was furious.

"If the only reason was you wanted to know how much money I make so you can borrow some to buy a silly toy or some other nonsense, then you march straight to your room and go to bed. Think about why you're being so selfish. I work hard and long hours everyday and don't have time to rest."

The little boy quietly went to his room and shut the door. The man sat down and started to get even madder about the little boy's questioning. How dare he ask such questions only to get some money? After an hour or so, the man had calmed down, and started to think he may have been a little hard on his son. May be there was something he really needed to buy with that $10.00 and he really didn't ask for money very often. The man went to the door of the little boy's room and opened the door.

"Are you asleep son?" he asked.

"No daddy, I'm awake," replied the boy.

"I've been thinking, maybe I was too hard on you earlier," said the man. "It's been a long day and I took my aggravation out on you. Here's that $10.00 you asked for."

The little boy sat straight up, beaming.

"Oh, Jazaak Allah daddy!" he yelled. Then, reaching under his pillow, he pulled out some more crumpled up bills. The man, seeing that the boy already had money, started to get angry again. The little boy slowly counted out his money, then looked up at the man.

"Why did you want more money if you already had some?" the father grumbled.

"Because I didn't have enough, but now I do," the little boy replied. "Daddy, I have $20.00 now... Can I buy an hour of your time?"

It is very important that we give time attention love and care to those who need it. There are many people at home an outside who need our love and attention like our siblings, parents, grandparents, widows, orphans and poor people. We should give them time, love, attention, care, food and share knowledge with them. We should do it before they have to resort to asking for a $10 bill.

Two frogs

A group of frogs were traveling through the woods, and two of them fell into a deep well. When the other frogs saw how deep the well was, they told the two frogs that they were as good as dead. The two frogs ignored the comments and tried to jump up out of the well with all their might. The other frogs kept telling them to stop; that they were as good as dead because there was no way the little frogs could jump out of such depth. Finally, one of the frogs took heed to what the other frogs were saying and gave up. He fell down and died.

The other frog continued to jump as hard as he could. Once again, the crowd of frogs yelled at him to stop the pain and just die. He jumped

even harder and finally made it out. When he got out, the other frogs said, "Did you not hear us?" The frog explained to them that he was deaf. He thought they were encouraging him all the time.

There is power of life and death in the tongue. An encouraging word to someone who is down can lift them up and help them make it pass the storm. A destructive word to someone who is down can be what it takes to kill the motivation to live life in a meaningful way. Be careful of what you say. Speak life to those who cross your path. It is usually hard to understand that an encouraging word can go such a long way. Anyone can speak words that tend to rob another of the spirit to continue in difficult times. Special is the individual who will take the time to encourage another.

Love and Time

Once upon a time, there was an island where all the feelings lived: Happiness, Sadness, Knowledge, and all of the others, including Love. One day it was announced to the feelings that the island would sink so all constructed boats and left except for Love. Love was the only one who stayed. Love wanted to hold on until the last possible moment. When the island had almost sunk, Love decided to ask for help.

Richness was passing by Love in a grand boat.

Love said, "Richness, can you take me with you?"

Richness answered, "No, I can't. There is a lot of gold and silver in my boat. There is no place here for you."

Love decided to ask Vanity who was also passing by in a beautiful vessel. "Vanity, please help me!"

"I can't help you, Love. You are all wet and might damage my boat," Vanity answered.

Sadness was close by so Love asked, "Sadness, let me go with you."

"Oh . . . Love, I am so sad that I need to be by myself!"

Happiness passed by Love, too, but she was so happy that she did not even hear when Love called her.

Suddenly, there was a voice,

"Come, Love, I will take you." It was an elder,

So blessed and overjoyed, Love even forgot to ask the elder where they were going. When they reached dry land, the elder went her own way. Realizing how much she owed the elder, Love asked Knowledge, another elder,

"Who helped me?"

"It was Time," Knowledge answered.

"Time?" asked Love. "But why did Time help me?"

Knowledge smiled with deep wisdom and answered, "Because only Time is capable of understanding how valuable Love is." Remember that the riches of this world, the happiness and sadness, all of these come and go. They are never with anyone forever. There have been many people who were born rich and died poor, still others were born poor but died rich. Yet others came and went poor but had many ups and downs.

The pride beauty and vanity that come with the deceptive wealth, happiness and sadness is always short-lived and gives false hopes making

us live in castles of sands. But only the prudence and wisdom of knowledge and the experience of time know the value of love. But the love of riches, temporary happiness and sadness, and failing vanity will keep us stranded on the sinking island of false hopes. Only the love of Allah Ta'ala and those people and things that love Allah Ta'ala will deliver us to the land of undying happiness and success with the help of patience and insight.

The Real Treasure of Hard Work

A father, being on the verge of death, wished to be sure that his sons would give the same attention to his farm as he himself had given it. He called them to his bedside and said, "My sons, there is a great treasure hidden in one of my orchards." The sons, after his death, took their spades and mattocks and carefully dug over every portion of their land. They found no treasure, but the orchards paid them back by an extraordinary and superabundant crop.

The Lion in a Farmyard

A lion entered a farmyard. The farmer, wishing to catch him, shut the gate. When the lion found that he could not escape, he flew upon the sheep and killed them, and then attacked the oxen. The farmer, beginning to be alarmed for his own safety, opened the gate and released the lion.

On his departure the farmer grievously lamented the destruction of his sheep and oxen, but his wife, who had been a spectator to all that took place, said, "On my word, you are rightly served, for how could you for a moment think of shutting up a lion along with you in your farmyard

when you know that you shake in your shoes if you only hear his roar at a distance?"

The Fisherman and the Dancing Fishes

A fisherman once took his bagpipes to the bank of a river, and played upon them with the hope of making the fish rise; but never a one put his nose out of the water. So he cast his net into the river and soon drew it forth filled with fish. Then he took his bagpipes again, and, as he played, the fish leapt up in the net.

"Ah, you dance now when I play," said he.

"Yes," said an old fish, "When you are in a man's power you must do as he bids you."

The Flea and the Man

A man, very much annoyed with a flea, caught him at last, and said, "Who are you and who dare to feed on my limbs, and to cost me so much trouble in catching you?"

The flea replied, "O my dear sir, pray spare my life, and destroy me not, for I cannot possibly do you much harm." The man, laughing, replied, "Now you shall certainly die by my own hands, for no evil, whether it be small or large, ought to be tolerated."

Man is created impatient and we humans start to despair with petty problems becoming thankless and desperate. Only those will succeed who are patient, and they number very few.

Short Stories (Part 2)

The Thief and His Mother

A boy stole a lesson-book from one of his schoolmates and took it home to his mother. She not only abstained from beating him, but encouraged him. The next time he stole a cloak and brought it to her, and she again commended him. The youth, advanced to adulthood, proceeded to steal things of still greater value. At last he was caught and having his hands bound behind him, was led away to the place of public execution.

His Mother followed in the crowd and violently beat herself in sorrow, whereupon the young man said, "I wish to say something to my mother in her ear." She came close to him, and he quickly seized her ear with his teeth and bit it off. The mother upbraided him as an unusual child, whereon he replied, "Ah! If you had beaten me when I first stole and brought to you that lesson-book, I should not have come to this, nor would have been thus led to a disgraceful death."

You Toil I Profit

A lion and a bear seized a kid at the same moment, and fought fiercely for its possession. When they had fearfully lacerated each other and were tired from the long combat, they laid down exhausted with fatigue. A fox, who had gone round them at a distance several times, saw them both stretched on the ground with the kid lying untouched in the middle. He ran in between them, and seizing the kid scampered off as fast as he could. The lion and the bear saw him, but not being able to get up, said, "Woe to us, that we should have fought and belaboured ourselves

only to serve the fox." We should not fight and argue with each other because there is always a lazy an sly fox waiting to exploit our disunity.

The Wooden Bowl

A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and a four-year old grandson. The old man's hands trembled, his eyesight was blurred, and his step faltered. The family ate together every night at the dinner table. But the elderly grandfather's shaky hands and failing sight made eating rather difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor. When he grasped the glass, milk spilled on the tablecloth. The son and daughter-in-law became irritated with the mess.

"We must do something about father," said the son. "I've had enough of his spilled milk, noisy eating, and food on the floor."

So the husband and wife set a small table in the corner. There, grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed dinner at the dinner table. Since grandfather had broken a dish or two, his food was served in a wooden bowl. Sometimes when the family glanced in grandfather's direction, he had a tear in his eye as he ate alone. Still, the only words the couple had for him were sharp admonitions when he dropped a fork or spilled food. The four-year-old watched it all in silence.

One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with wood scraps on the floor. He asked the child sweetly, "What are you making?" Just as sweetly, the boy responded, "Oh, I am making a little bowl for you and mama to eat your food in when I grow up." The four-year-old smiled and went back to work. The words so struck the parents that they were speechless. Then tears started to stream down their cheeks. Though no word was spoken, both knew what must be done.

That evening the husband took grandfather's hand and gently led him back to the family table.

For the remainder of his days he ate every meal with the family. And for some reason, neither the husband nor the wife seemed to care any longer when a fork was dropped, milk spilled, or the tablecloth soiled. Children are remarkably perceptive. Their eyes always observe, their ears always listen, and their minds always process the messages they absorb. If they see us patiently provide a happy atmosphere for family members, they will imitate that attitude for the rest of their lives.

Plane Tree

Two travellers, worn out by the heat of the summer's sun, laid themselves down at noon under the widely spread out branches of a plane tree. As they rested under its shade, one of the travellers said to the other, "What a singularly useless tree is the plane! It bears no fruit, and is not of the least service to man."

The plane tree, interrupting him, said, "You ungrateful fellows! Do you, while receiving benefit from me and resting under my shade, dare to describe me as useless, and unprofitable?'

Cold Winters

It was October and a tribe of nomas in a remote part of America asked their new chief if the coming winter was going to be extremely cold or mild. Since he was a chief in a modern society he had never been taught the old secrets. When he looked at the sky he couldn't tell what the winter was going to be like.

Nevertheless, to be on the safe side he told his tribe that the winter was indeed going to be cold and that the members of the village should collect firewood to be prepared. But being a practical leader, after several days he got an idea. He went to the phone booth, called the United Staes National Weather Service and asked, "Is the coming winter going to be cold?"

"It looks like this winter is going to be quite cold," the meteorologist at the weather service responded.

So the chief went back to his people and told them to collect even more firewood in order to be prepared. A week later he called the Weather Service again. "Does it still look like it is going to be a very cold winter?"

"Yes," the man at Weather Service again replied, "it's going to be a very cold winter."

The chief again went back to his people and ordered them to collect every scrap of firewood they could find. Two weeks later the chief called the Weather Service again.

"Are you absolutely sure that the winter is going to be very cold?"

"Absolutely," the man replied. "It's looking more and more like it

is going to be one of the coldest winters ever."

"How can you be so sure?" the Chief asked.

The weatherman replied, "The nomas are collecting firewood like crazy."

availed herself of the occasion to invite a stranger cat, a friend of hers, saying, "My master is giving a feast, and there is always enough food for all; come and sup with me tonight." The cat thus invited, went at the hour appointed, and seeing the preparations for so grand an entertainment, said in the joy of her heart, "How glad I am that I came! I do not often get such a chance as this. I will take care and eat enough to last me both today and tomorrow."

While she was congratulating herself and conveying her pleasure to her friend, the cook saw her moving about among his dishes and, seizing her by her fore and hind paws, bundled her without ceremony out of the window. She fell with force upon the ground and limped away, howling dreadfully. Her yelling soon attracted other street cats which came up to her and inquired how she had enjoyed her supper.

She replied, "Why, to tell you the truth, I ate so much that I am full and cannot remember what I ate."

Gossip Must Be Seen Not Heard

An eagle made her nest at the top of a lofty oak; a cat, having found a convenient hole, moved into the middle of the trunk; and a wild ram, with her young, took shelter in a hollow at its foot. The cat cunningly resolved to destroy this chance-made colony.

To carry out her design, she climbed to the nest of the eagle, and said, "Destruction is being prepared for you, and for me too, unfortunately. The wild ram, whom you see daily digging up the earth, wishes to uproot the oak, so she may, on its fall, seize our families as food for her young."

Having thus frightened the eagle out of her senses, she crept down to the cave of the ram, and said, "Your children are in great danger; for as soon as you go out with your litter to find food, the eagle is prepared to pounce upon one of your little ones." Having instilled these fears into the ram, she went and pretended to hide herself in the hollow of the tree. When night came she went forth with silent foot and obtained food for herself and her kittens, but feigning to be afraid, she kept on a lookout all through the day. Meanwhile, the eagle, full of fear of the ram, sat still on the branches, and the ram, terrified by the eagle, did not dare to go out from her cave. And thus they both, along with their families, perished from hunger, and afforded ample provision for the cat and her kittens.

Do Unto Others, As You Would Have Them Do Unto You

An eagle and a fox formed an intimate friendship and decided to live near each other. The eagle built her nest on the branches of a tall tree, while the fox crept into the underwood and there produced her young. Not long after they had agreed upon this plan, the eagle, being in want of provision for her young ones, swooped down while the fox was out, seized upon one of the little cubs, and feasted herself and her brood.

The fox on her return, discovered what had happened, but was less grieved for the death of her young than for her inability to avenge the eagle. A just retribution, however, quickly fell upon the eagle. While hovering near an altar, on which some villagers were sacrificing a goat, she suddenly seized a piece of the flesh, and carried it, along with a burning cinder, to her nest. A strong breeze soon fanned the spark into a flame, and the eaglets, as yet unfledged and helpless, were roasted in their nest and dropped down dead at the bottom of the tree. There, the fox gobbled them up, while the eagle could not save them.

The Hare and the Tortoise

Once upon a time a tortoise and a hare had an argument about who was faster.

They decided to settle the argument with a race. They agreed on a route and started off the race. The hare shot ahead and ran briskly for some time. Then seeing that he was far ahead of the tortoise, he thought he'd sit under a tree for some time and relax before continuing the race. He sat under the tree and soon fell asleep. The tortoise plodding on overtook him and soon finished the race, emerging as the undisputed champ. The hare woke up and realised that he'd lost the race.

"Slow and Steady Wins the Race."

The hare was disappointed at losing the race and he did some soul-searching. He realised that he'd lost the race only because he had been overconfident, careless and lax. If he had not taken things for granted, there's no way the tortoise could have beaten him. So he challenged the tortoise to another race. The tortoise agreed. This time, the hare went all out and ran without stopping from start to finish. He won by several miles.

"Fast and consistent always beats the slow and steady."

But the story doesn't end here. The tortoise did some thinking this time, and realized that there's no way he could beat the hare in a race the way it was currently formatted. He thought for a while, and then challenged the hare to another race, but on a slightly different route. The hare agreed.

They started off. In keeping with his self-made commitment to be consistently fast, the hare took off and ran at top speed until he came to a broad river. The finishing line was a couple of kilometers on the other side of the river. The hare sat there wondering what to do. In the meantime the tortoise trundled along, got into the river, swam to the opposite bank, continued walking and finished the race.

"Only challenge in a field where you can compete."

The hare and the tortoise, by this time, had become pretty good friends and they did some thinking together. Both realised that the last race could have been run much better.

So they decided to do the last race again, but to run as a team this time. They started off, and this time the hare carried the tortoise till the riverbank. There, the tortoise took over and swam across with the hare on his back. On the opposite bank, the hare again carried the tortoise and they reached the finishing line together. They both felt a greater sense of satisfaction than they'd felt earlier.

"Collaboration is better than competition."

There are more lessons to be learnt from this story. Note that neither the hare nor the tortoise gave up after failures. The hare decided to work harder and put in more effort after his failure. The tortoise changed his strategy because he was already working as hard as he could. In life, when faced with failure, sometimes it is appropriate to work harder and put in more effort. Sometimes it is appropriate to change strategy and try something different. And sometimes it is appropriate to do both.

"My son, do not relate your dream to your brothers, lest they should devise a plan against you. Surely, Satan is an open enemy for mankind. And it will be in this way that your Lord will choose you and teach you the correct interpretation of events, and will perfect His bounty upon you and upon the House of Ya'qub, as He has perfected it earlier upon your fore-fathers, Ibrahim and IsHaq. Surely, your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing." (Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 5-6)

Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام heeded his father's advice. He did not tell his stepbrothers what he had seen. It is well known that they hated him so much so that it was difficult for him to feel secure telling them what was in his heart and in his dreams.

Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام was eighteen years old, very handsome and robust, with a gentle temperament. He was respectful, kind and considerate. His blood brother was equally pleasant. Because of their refined qualities, the father loved the two more than his other children, and would not let them out of his sight. To protect them, he kept them busy with work in the house's garden. Hazrat Yousuf's stepbrothers plotted to martyr him.

(It happened) when they said, "Yusuf and his brother are dearer to our father than we are, while we are a whole group. Surely, our father is in clear error. Let us kill Yusuf, or throw him at some place on earth, and thus your father's full attention will be devoted for you alone, and after doing that, you may become a righteous people."One of them said, "Do not kill Yusuf; rather, cast him into the bottom of a pit, so that some caravan of travellers may pick him up, if you are going to do something anyway." (Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 8-10)

In spite of this, his brothers sat down to conspire against him.

One of them asked: "Why does our father love Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام more than us?"

Another answered: "Perhaps because of his beauty."

A third said: "Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام and his brother occupied our father's heart."

The first complained: "Our father has gone all astray."

One of them suggested the solution to the matter; kill Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام.

"Where should we kill him?"

"We should banish him away from these grounds."

"We will send him to a distant land."

"Why should we not kill him and have rest so that the favour of your father may be give to you alone?"

However, Yahudh, the eldest and most intelligent among them, said: "There is no need to kill him when all you want is to get rid of him. Look here, let us throw him into a well and he will be picked up by a passing caravan. They will take him with them to a distant land. He will disappear from your father's sight and our purpose will be served with his exile. Then after that we shall repent for our crime and become good people once again."

The discussion continued on the idea of dropping Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام into a well, as it was seen as the safest solution. The plan to kill him was defeated; kidnap into a distant land was approved. It was the cleverest of ideas.

So they went to their pious father and said:

"O our father! Why is it that you do not trust us about Yusuf, while we are his well-wishers indeed. Send him with us tomorrow, that he may eat and play, and of course, we will remain as guards for him." He said, "It makes me sad that you should take him with you, and I fear that some wolf may eat him up when you are heedless of him." They said, "If a wolf eats him up, while we are a whole group, we are then losers indeed."

(Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 11-14)

Hazrat Yaqub's عليه السلام argument gave them an idea. They did not know if he meant the wolves within them, or the wild wolves. No one but Allah تبارك وتعالى knows. They coaxed their father to send Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام with them; he agreed under their pressure.

They were excited that they could now get rid of Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام for after this they could stand a better chance of receiving their father's affection. On leaving home, they went directly to the well, as they had planned, on the pretext of drinking water. One of them put his arms around Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام and held him tightly. Startled by this unusual behavior, Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام struggled to free himself. More brothers rushed to hold him. One of them removed his shirt. Some more joined into lift Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام up and cast him into the deep well. Hazrat Yousuf's heartbreaking appeals made no difference to their cruel hearts.

Then Allah تبارك وتعالى revealed to Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام that he was safe and should not fear.

And We revealed to him (Yusuf), You will (one day) remind them of this deed of theirs, and they will not recognize (you).

(Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 15)

There was water in the well, which buoyed Hazrat Yousuf's body, so he was not harmed. He sat lonely in the water, and then clung to a rock ledge overheard and climbed on top of it. His brothers had left him in this desolate place.

Then they killed a sheep and soaked Hazrat Yousuf's shirt in its blood. One brother said that they should swear to keep their deed a close secret. All of them took the oath.

And at nightfall, they came to their father weeping.

(Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 16)

In the shadows of night, the silence was broken by the crying of ten people. The Hazrat Yaqub عليه السلام was sitting in his house when the sons enter, and questioned: "Why this weeping? Has anything happened to our flock?" They answered crying:

"O our father! We went racing with one another, and left Yusuf with our belongings, and the wolf ate him up. You will never believe us, howsoever truthful we may be." (Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 17)

"We were surprised after returning from the race that Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام was in the belly of the wolf."

"We did not see him!"

"You will not believe us even though we are truthful! We are telling you what happened!"

"The wolf has eaten Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام!"

"This is Hazrat Yousuf's shirt. We found it soaked with blood, and did not find Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام!"

Deep down in the heart Hazrat Yaqub عليه السلام knew that his beloved son was still alive and that his other sons were lying. He held the blood stained shirt in his hands, spread it out and remarked, "What a merciful wolf! He ate up my beloved son without tearing his shirt!" Their faces turned red when he demanded more information, but each swore by Allah تبارك وتعالى that he was telling the truth. The brokenhearted father burst into tears:

"Rather, your inner desires have tempted you to do something. So, patience is best. It is Allah whose help is sought against what you describe." (Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 17)

The father acted wisely by praying for mighty patience, which is free of doubt, and by trusting in Allah for help against what they had plotted against him and his son.

In the dark well Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام managed to find a stone ledge to hold onto. Around him was, total darkness and an eerie silence. Fearful thoughts entered his mind, "What would happen to him? Where would he find food? Why had his own brothers turned against him? Would his father know of his plight?" His father's smile flashed before him recalling the love and affection he had always shown him. Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام began to pray sincerely, pleading to Allah تبارك وتعالى for rescue. Gradually his fear began to subside. His Creator was testing him to fill in him a spirit of patience and courage. Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام surrendered himself to the will of his Lord.

A caravan was on its way to Egypt. The caravan of merchants halted at this famous well for water. A man lowered in his bucket. Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام was startled by the bucket hurtling down and grabbed hold of it before it could land in the water. As the man began to haul he felt the load unusually heavy, so he peeped into the well. What he saw shocked him; a man was clinging to the rope! He held the rope tightly and

shouted to his friends, "Better give me hand fellows! Looks like I found real treasure in the well!"

His companions rushed to the well and helped him to pull out the stranger holding onto the rope. Standing before them was a healthy, handsome youth, beaming with an angelic smile. They saw in him a handsome prize, for money was all that mattered to them. Immediately, they clapped iron shackles on his feet and took him along to Egypt, far away from his beloved homeland of Canaan.

All over the Egyptian city the news spread that an unusually handsome, robust young slave was on sale. People gathered by the hundreds at the slave market. Some were spectators, others were bidders the elite and the rich, each one craning his neck to view the handsome specimen. The auctioneer had a field day as the bidding went wild, each buyer trying to outbid the other. Eventually, the Aziz, the chief minister of Egypt, outbid all the others and took Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام to his mansion.

And they sold him for a small price, a few pieces of silver. They were of those who regarded him insignificant. (Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 20)

And the one who bought him from Egypt said to his wife, "Make his stay graceful. He may be useful for us. Or, we may adopt him as a son." And thus We established Yusuf in the land, so that We should teach him the interpretation of events. Allah is powerful in (enforcing) His command, but most of the people do not know. (Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 21)

Love for Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام was thrust into the heart of the man who bought him, and he was a man of no mean position. He was an important personage, one of the ruling classes of Egypt.

Therefore, Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام was pleasantly surprised when the chief minister of Egypt ordered his men to remove the heavy shackles

from his swollen feet. He was also surprised when he told Hazrat Yousuf عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَام not to betray his trust; he would not be ill-treated if he behaved himself. Hazrat Yousuf عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَام smiled at his benefactor, thanked him, and promised to be loyal.

Hazrat Yousuf عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَام felt at ease, for at last he was sheltered and would be well cared for. He thanked Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالٰى over and over and wondered at the mysteries of life. Not so long ago he had been cast into a deep, dark well with no hope of ever coming out alive. Next he was rescued, and then enslaved in iron shackles, and now he was moving freely in a luxurious mansion with enough food to enjoy. However, his heart ached with longing for his parents and brother, Benjamin, and he shed tears daily.

The Best Story Ever (Part 2)

He was given wisdom in affairs and knowledge of life and its conditions. He was given the art of conversation, captivating those who heard him. He was given nobility and self restraint, which made him an irresistible personality. His master soon knew that Allah تبارك وتعالى had graced him with Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام. He understood that Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام was the most honest, straightforward and noble person he had met in his life. Therefore, he put Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام in charge of his household, honoured him, and treated him as a son.

Due to a series of events that was to be a big test of Hazrat Yousuf's عليه السلام faith, he ended up in the prison. He was forced to go to the prison or commit sins, so Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام preferred prison.

He said, "My Lord, the prison is dearer to me than what these women invite me to do. If You do not turn their guile away from me, I shall get inclined towards them and shall be among the ignorant."

(Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 33)

Prison was Hazrat Yousuf's third test. During this period Allah تبارك وتعالى blessed him with an extraordinary gift; the ability to interpret dreams. At about the same time two other men landed in the prison. The two men sensed that Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام was not a common man. Both men had vivid dreams, and they were anxious to have them explained. One of them, the king's cook, dreamed that he stood in a place with bread on his head, and birds were eating the bread. The other was also a servant of king; he dreamed that he was serving the king a drink. The two went to Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام and told him their dreams, asking him to give them their meaning.

First, Hazrat Yousuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام called them to Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. Then he said that the cook would be punished until he dies and that the other servant will return to the service of the king. Hazrat Yousuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام told the servant to remember him and tell the king that there was a wronged soul called Hazrat Yousuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام in prison. What Hazrat Yousuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام predicted did happen; the cook was crucified and the servant returned to the palace.

And he (Yusuf) said to the one whom he believed likely to be released out of the two, "Tell your master about me." Then, the Satan made him forget to tell his master. So, he (Yusuf) remained in prison for a few years.
(Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 42)

After some time passed the king saw a dream. He saw himself on the banks of the Nile river. The water receded becoming mere mud. The fish began to skip and jump in the mud. Seven fat cows came out of the river followed by seven lean cows. The seven lean ones eat greedily the seven fat ones. The king was frightened. Seven ears of green grain grew on the riverbanks and disappear in the mud. On the same spot grew seven dry ears of grain.

The king awoke shocked, scared and depressed. Not knowing what all this meant he sent for the sorcerers, priests and ministers, and told them his dream.

The sorcerers said, "This is a mixed up dream. How can any of that be? It is a nightmare."

The priests said, "Perhaps his majesty had a heavy supper."

The chief minister said, "Could it be that his majesty was exposed and did not draw the blanket up at night?"

The king's jester said, jokingly, "His majesty is beginning to grow old, and so his dreams are confused."

They reached an unanimous conclusion that it was only a nightmare. The news reached the servant. He recollected the dream he had in prison and compared it to the king's dream, and, therefore Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام came to mind. He ran to the king to tell him about Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام, who was the only one capable to interpreting the dream. The servant said, "He had asked me to remember him to you, but I forgot." The king sent the servant to ask Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام about the dream.

Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام interpreted it to him: "There will be seven years of abundance. If the land is properly cultivated, there will be an excess of good harvest, more than the people will need. This should be stored. Thereafter, seven years of famine will follow, during which time the excess grain could be used."

He also advised that during the famine they should save some grain to be used for seed for the next harvest. Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام then added; "After seven years of drought, there will be a year during which water will be plentiful. If the water is properly used, grapevines and olive trees will grow in abundance, providing plenty of grapes and olive oil."

The king wanted to meet Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام. When Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام came, the king spoke to him. Hazrat Yousuf's عليه الصلاة والسلام replies astonished the king with his cultural refinement and wide knowledge.

Then the conversation turned to the dream. Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام advised the king to start planning for years of famine ahead. He informed him that the famine would affect not only Egypt but the neighboring countries as well. The king offered him a high position. Hazrat Yousuf

عليه الصلاة والسلام asked to be made controller of the granaries, so that he could guard the nation's harvest and thereby safeguard it during the anticipated drought. By this Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام did not mean to seize an opportunity or personal gain; he merely wanted to rescue hungry nations for a period of seven years. It was a sheer self-sacrifice on his part.

The wheels of time turned. During the seven good years, Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام had full control over the cultivation, harvesting, and storage of crops. During the following seven years, drought followed and famine spread throughout the region, including Canaan, the homeland of Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام. Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام advised the king that as his kingdom was blessed with reserved grain, he should sell his grain to the needy nations at a fair price. The king agreed, and the good news spread all over the region.

Yaqub عليه الصلاة والسلام sent ten of his sons, all except Benjamin, to Egypt to purchase provisions. Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام heard of the ten brothers who had come from afar and who could not speak the language of the Egyptians. When they called on him to purchase their needs, Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام immediately recognized his brothers, but they did not know him. How could they? To them Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام no longer existed; he had been thrown into the deep, dark well many years ago!

Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام received them warmly. After supplying them with provisions, he asked where they had come from. They explained, "We are eleven brothers, the children of noble Hazrat Yaqub عليه الصلاة والسلام. The youngest is at home tending to the needs of our aging father."

Allah the Almighty narrated:

And came the brothers of Yusuf and appeared before him. He recognized them, while they did not recognize him.When he equipped

them with their provisions, he said, "Bring to me your other brother from your father's side. Do you not see that I give full measure, and I extend the best hospitality? Still, if you do not bring him to me, then you deserve no (further) measure from me, nor shall you approach me any more." They said, "We shall persuade his father about him and we will certainly do it." And he (Yusuf) said to his boys, "Put their goods in their camel-packs. Perhaps they will recognize it when they go back to their family; perhaps they will come again."

So, when they returned to their father, they said, "Father, the (required) measure (of grain) has been withheld from us, therefore, send our brother with us, so that we may receive our full measure. And, of course, we are his guards." He said, "Shall I trust you about him as I trusted you earlier about his brother? Well, Allah is the best guardian, and He is the Most-Merciful of all the merciful."

When they opened their baggage, they found their money given back to them. They said, "Our father, what else should we want? Here is our money given back to us, and we shall bring food to our family, protect our brother and add the measure of one camel more. That is an easy measure."

He said, "I shall never send him with you until you give me a pledge in the name of Allah that you will definitely bring him back to me, unless you are overpowered (by circumstances)." So, when they gave him their pledge, he said, "Allah is watchful over what we say."

And he said, "O my sons, do not enter (the city) all of you from the same gate, rather, enter from different gates. And I cannot help you in any way against (the will of) Allah. Sovereignty belongs to none but Allah. In Him I place my trust, and all those who trust should trust in Him alone." (Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 58-67)

The brothers undertook the long journey to Egypt, taking good care of Benjamin. Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام welcomed them heartily, although, with difficulty, he suppressed the desire to embrace Benjamin that arose within him. He prepared a feast for them and seated them in pairs. Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام arranged to sit next to his beloved brother Benjamin, who began to weep. Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام asked him why he was crying. He replied: "If my brother Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام had been here, I would have sat next to him."

That night, when Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام and Benjamin were alone in a room, Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام asked whether he would have him for a brother. Benjamin respectfully answered that he regarded his host as a wonderful person, but he could never take the place of his brother. Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام broke down, and amidst flowing tears said; "My loving brother, I am the brother who was lost and whose name you are constantly repeating. Fate has brought us together after many years of separation. This is Allah's favour. But let it be a secret between us for the time being." Benjamin flung his arms around Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام and both brothers shed tears of joy.

The next day, while their bags were being filled with grains to load onto the camels, Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام ordered one of his attendants to place the king's gold cup which was used for measuring the grain into Benjamin's saddlebag. When the brothers were ready to set out, the gates were locked, and the court crier shouted, "O you travelers, you are thieves!" The accusation was most unusual, and the people gathered around Hazrat Yousuf's brothers.

"What have you lost?" his brothers inquired.

A soldier said, "The king's golden cup. Whoever can trace it we will give a beast load of grain."

Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام heard their resentment with his own ears and was filled with regret. Yet, he swallowed his own resentment, keeping it within.

He said to himself, "You are even worse in position. Allah knows best of what you state." (Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 76)

The Best Story Ever (Part 3)

Silence fell upon them after these remarks by the brothers. Then they forgot their secret satisfaction and thought of Hazrat Yaqub عليه السلام; they had taken an oath with him that they would not betray his son. They began to beg Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام for mercy.

They said, "O Aziz, he has a father, a very old man. So, take one of us in his place. We see you are a generous man." (Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 78)

Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام answered calmly:

"We seek Allah's refuge from keeping anyone other than him with whom we have found our thing, otherwise we shall be unjust."

(Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 79)

The brothers went on pleading for mercy. However, the guards said that the king had spoke and his word was law.

So when they lost hope in him, they went aside for consultation. The oldest of them said (Yahuda), "Do you not know that your father has taken pledge from you in the name of Allah, while you had defaulted earlier in the case of Yusuf. So, I shall never leave this land unless my father permits me or Allah decides about me. He is the best of all judges."

(Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 80)

The brothers left enough provisions behind for Yahuda, who stayed at a tavern awaiting the fate of Benjamin. In the meantime, Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام kept Benjamin in his house as his personal guest and told him how he had devised the plot to put the king's cup in his bag, in order to keep him behind, so as to protect him. He was also glad that Yahuda had stayed behind, as he was a good hearted brother. Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام secretly arranged to watch over Yahuda's well being.

Hazrat Yousuf's plan in sending the others back was to test their sincerity, to see if they would come back for the two brothers they had left behind. Allah revealed to us what happened at their meeting with their father.

He (Yahuda) said, "Return to your father and say: O father, your son has committed theft, and we do not testify except what we know, and we could not guard against the unseen. Ask (the people of) the town in which we have been, and the caravan with which we have come, and undoubtedly we are truthful." (Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 81-82)

He was puzzled, scarcely believing the news. He was overwhelmed with sorrow and his eyes wept tears.

He (Ya'qub) said, "Rather, your inner desires have seduced you to something. So, patience is best. Hopefully, Allah may bring them all together. Surely, He is the All-Knowing, All-Wise."

(Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 80)

A pal of aloneness closed over him, yet he found consolation in patience and trusted in Allah.

He turned away from them and said, "How sad I am about Yusuf!" and his eyes turned white with sorrow and he was suppressing (his anger and grief).

They said, "By God, you will not stop remembering Yusuf until you you become weak with old age, or perish."

He said: He said, "I do not complain of my anguish and sorrow to anyone but Allah, and I know from Allah what you do not know.

O my sons, go and search for Yusuf and his brother, and do not lose hope in the mercy of Allah. In fact, only the infidels lose hope in Allah's mercy." (Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 87)

The caravan set out for Egypt. The brothers - on their way to see the chief minister (Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام) - were poor and depressed.

On reaching Egypt they collected Yahuda and called on Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام, to whom they pleaded:

"Aziz, we and our family are struck by distress, and we have brought some goods of very little worth. So, give us the full measure (of grain) and be charitable to us. Surely, Allah rewards the charitable.

(Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 88)

At the end, they begged Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام. They asked alms of him, appealing to his heart, reminding him that Allah تبارك وتعالى rewards alms givers. At this moment, in the midst of their plight, Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام spoke to them in their native tongue.

He said, "Do you know what you did to Yusuf and his brother when you were ignorant?"

They said, "Is it that you are, in fact, Yusuf?

He said, "I am Yusuf, and this is my brother. Allah has been very kind to us. Surely, whoever fears Allah and observes patience, Allah does not let the reward of such good people to go to waste."

They said, "We swear by Allah, indeed Allah has given to you preference over us, and we were guilty in fact."

(Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 89-91)

The brothers began to tremble with fear, but Hazrat Yousuf عليه الصلاة والسلام comforted them:

He said, "No reproach upon you today! May Allah forgive you, and He is the Most- Merciful of all the merciful." (Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 92)

Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام embraced them, and together they wept with joy. It was not possible for Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام to leave his responsible office without proper replacement, so he advised his brothers:

"Go with this shirt of mine, and put it over the face of my father, and he will turn into a sighted man. And bring to me all your family."

(Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 93)

And so the caravan headed back for Palestine. Hazrat Yaqub عليه السلام, now an old man, was sitting in his room; tears have been flowing down his cheeks. He stood up all of a sudden, dressed and went out to his son's wives. Then he lifted up his face to Heaven and smelled the air.

The wife of the eldest son remarked: "He (Yaqub) has come out of his room today." The women inquired about what was amiss. There was a hint of a smile on his face. The others asked him: "How do you feel today?"

He answered: "I can smell Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام in the air."

The wives left him alone, saying to one another that there was no hope for the old man. "He will die of weeping over Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام."

"Did he talk about Hazrat Yousuf's shirt?"

"I do not know. He said he could smell him; perhaps he has gone mad."

That day the old man wanted a cup of milk to break his fast, for he had been fasting. At night he changed his clothes. The caravan was traveling in the desert with Hazrat Yousuf's shirt hidden among the grain. It neared the old man's estate. He gesticulated in his room, and then he prayed a long time, lifting his hands to heaven and sniffing the air. He was weeping as the shirt was nearing him.

And when the caravan set out (from Egypt), their father (Ya'qub) said (in Canaan), "I sense the fragrance of Yusuf, if you do not take me to be senile (a person who has weakness of mind because of old age)." They said, "By God, you are still in your old fallacy!"

So, when came the man with good news, he put it (the shirt) on his face, and he turned into a sighted man. He (Ya'qub) said, "Did I not tell you that I know from Allah what you do not know?"

They said, "Our father, pray to Allah to forgive us our sins. Surely, we have been guilty." (Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 94-97)

The story began with a dream and it ends with the interpretation of the dream. Almighty Allah narrated:

He said, "I shall pray to my Lord to forgive you. Surely, He is the Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful."

Later, when they came to Yusuf, he placed his parents near himself and said, "Enter Egypt, God willing, in peace."

And he raised his parents up on the throne, and they all fell before him in prostration. He said, "My father, here is the fulfillment of my early dream. My Lord has made it come true. He favored me when he released me from the prison, and brought you from the countryside after Satan had caused a rift between me and my brothers. Surely, my Lord does what He wills in a subtle way. Surely, He is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. My Lord, You have given me power to rule and the knowledge of interpreting events. O Creator of the heavens and the Earth, You are my guardian in this world and the Hereafter. Make me die a Muslim and make me join the righteous." (Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 98-101)

Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام arranged an audience with the king for himself and his family, to ask the king's permission for them to settle in Egypt. Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام was an asset to the kingdom, and the king was happy to have him remain with his household. Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام prostrated to Allah in gratitude.

Before he died, Yaqub عليه السلام advised his children to adhere to the teachings of Islam, the religion of all of Allah's Hazrats. Allah the Almighty revealed:

Is it that you were present when death approached Ya'qub, when he said to his sons: "What will you worship after me?" They said, "We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, Ibrahim, Ismai'l (Ishmael) and IsHaq (Isaac), the one God, and to Him we submit ourselves."

(Qur'aan chapter 2, verse 133)

Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام, at the moment of his death, asked his brothers to bury him beside his forefathers if they were to leave Egypt. So when Hazrat Yousuf عليه السلام passed away, he was placed in a coffin until such a time as he could be taken out of Egypt and buried beside his forefathers, as he had requested. It was said that he died at the age of one hundred ten.

Surely, in the narratives of these, there is a lesson for the people of understanding. It is not an invented story, rather, a confirmation of what has been before it, and an elaboration of everything, and guidance and mercy for people who believe. (Qur'aan chapter 12, verse 111)

Value

A speaker started off his seminar by holding up a $100 bill. In the room of two hundred people, he asked, "What is this piece of paper & is it worth anything?"

"It is a $100 bill, it can be exchanged in international & national markets for its quoted value to buy other products or currency of same worth?" replied one of the many participants who raised their hands.

He proceeded to crumple the dollar bill up using both his hands till it became a bundle of wrinkled paper.

He then unfolded it again and making an unsuccessful attempt to keep it straight he asked, "Would you still be able to negotiate it for it's quoted value?"

"Yes!!" was the echoing reply from the participants. "Well," he said, "Looks like I haven't done enough! What if I do this?" And he dropped it on the ground and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. He picked it up, which was now all crumpled, dirty, defaced & not easy to recognise from a distance.

"Now will some one like to trade it for its quoted value?" Many hands went in the air.

"I think this piece of currency is still holding its quoted value" replied a participant in a slightly unsure voice.

"This bill can still fetch goods worth a hundred Dollars" said the other participant. Everyone agreed.

"My friends, there is a very valuable lesson in this exercise that we just went through. It may have appeared to some of you that I was able to deform, deface, mutilate & alter the $100 bill during the process as the effects were clearly visible.

"However, No matter what I did to this piece of paper, you still upheld its negotiability because you were sure in your mind that my actions did not actually decrease its value. It was still a currency note worth $100.

"Many times in our lives, we feel like as if we are dropped, crumpled, and ground into the dirt by the decisions we make or the circumstances that come our way. We feel as though we are worthless. It may also appear to onlookers as if it has really happened to certain extent. But no matter what has happened or what will happen, please remember you never lose your value. Values that you cherish are indeed devoid of worldly disturbance & always are your saviour.

"One more thing to remember is that no matter what people say and no matter what you think of yourself; a true connoisseur and judge will realize if you are a gem or just an artificial jewelry. "

The English Language

There is no egg in eggplant, and beef in hamburger;
neither apple nor pine in pineapple.
And while no one knows what is in a hotdog,
you can be pretty sure it isn't canine.
English muffins were not invented in England
nor French fries in France.
Sweetmeats are candies, while sweetbreads,
which aren't sweet, are meat.
We take English for granted.
But if we explore its paradoxes,
we find that quicksand can work slowly,
boxing rings are square,
and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.
And why is it that writers write,
but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce,
and hammers don't ham?
If the plural of tooth is teeth,
why isn't the plural of booth, beeth?
One goose, 2 geese. So, one mouse, 2 meese?
Is cheese the plural of choose?
One mouse, 2 mice.

One louse, 2 lice.
One house, 2 hice?
If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught?
If a vegetarian eats vegetables,
what does a humanitarian eat?
Why do people recite at a play, and play at a recital?
Ship by truck or car and send cargo by ship?
Have noses that run and feet that smell?
Park on driveways and drive on parkways?
How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same,
while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites?
How can the weather be hot as Hell one day
and cold as Hell another?
When a house burns up, it burns down.
You fill in a form by filling it out
and an alarm clock goes off by going on.
You get in and out of a car,
yet you get on and off a bus.
When the stars are out, they are visible,
but when the lights are out, they are invisible.
And why, when I wind up my watch, I start it,
but when I wind up this essay, I end it?
English is a funny language...
it doesn't know if it is coming or going!!

What Non-Muslims Say About Our Beloved Prophet ﷺ

Mahatma Gandhi, statement published in 'Young India,'1924.

I wanted to know the best of the life of one who holds today an undisputed sway over the hearts of millions of mankind.... I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle. When I closed the second volume (of the Prophet's biography), I was sorry there was not more for me to read of that great life.

Michael Hart in 'The 100, A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons In History,' New York, 1978.

My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the secular and religious level. ...It is probable that the relative influence of Muhammad on Islam has been larger than the combined influence of Jesus Christ and St. Paul on Christianity. ...It is this unparalleled combination of secular and religious influence which I feel entitles Muhammad to be considered the most influential single figure in human history.

W.H. Stab in 'Islam and its Founder'

Judged by the smallness of the means at his disposal, and the extent and permanence of the work that he accomplished, his name in world's history shines with a more specious lustre than that of the Prophet of Makkah. To the impulse which he gave numberless dynasties have owed their existence, fair cities and stately palaces and temples have arisen, and wide provinces became obedient to the Faith. And beyond all this, his words have governed the belief of generations, been accepted as their rule of life, and their certain guide to the world to come. At a thousand shrines the voices of the faithful invoke blessings on him, whom they esteem the very Prophet of God, the seal of the Apostles.... Judged by the standards to human renown, the glory of what mortal can compare with his?

Stanley Lane-Poole in 'Studies in a Mosque'

He was one of those happy few who have attained the supreme joy of making one great truth their very life spring. He was the messenger of One God, and never to his life's end did he forget who he was or the message which was the marrow of his being. He brought his tidings to his people with a grand dignity sprung from the consciousness of his high office, together with a most sweet humility.

Rodwell in the Preface to his translation of the Holy Qur'an

Mohammad's career is a wonderful instance of the force and life that resides in him who possesses an intense faith in God and in the unseen world. He will always be regarded as one of those who have had that influence over the faith, morals and whole earthly life of their fellow men, which none but a really great man ever did, or can exercise; and whose efforts to propagate a great verity will prosper.

Some Amazing Facts

- The Ottoman Empire once had seven emperors in seven months. They died of (in order): burning, choking, drowning, stabbing, heart failure, poisoning and being thrown from a horse.
- You can make edible cheese from the milk of 24 different mammals.
- In ancient Rome it was considered a sign of leadership to be born with a crooked nose.
- It is possible to drown and not die. Technically the term 'drowning' refers to the process of taking water into the lungs, not to death caused by that process.
- At 40 degrees Centigrade a person loses about 14.4 calories per hour by breathing.
- The Eiffel Tower has 2,500,000 rivets in it.
- In a normal lifetime an American will eat 200 pounds of peanuts and 10,000 pounds of meat.
- A new book is published every 13 minutes in America.
- Napoleon was terrified of cats.
- If you yelled for 8 years, 7 months and 6 days you would have produced enough energy to heat one cup of coffee.
- A cockroach will live nine days without its head before it starves to death.
- The strongest muscle in the body is the tongue.

- Elephants are the only animals that cannot jump.
- An ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain.
- There are more than 1,00 chemicals in a cup of coffee.
- A lion's roar can be heard from five miles away
- Human hair and fingernails continue to grow after death.
- Tokyo has had 24 recorded instances of people either killed or receiving serious skull fractures while bowing to each other with the traditional Japanese greeting.

Consistency Sees Success

Once upon a time there was a village in Iran. The farmers had a lot of problems because a hill separated the farms from the market. They had to toil a lot to reach the market.

Due to this they all suffered. One day a daring young farmer, Diwan, declared, "We must build a road over this hill. Then it will be easy for us to go to the market to buy and sell." But the other farmers said, "You must be crazy. Who can make a road over a huge hill like this? It will be years and many people will lose lives."

But Diwan was determined. He thought that even if it takes a hundred years he will try to do it, because may be the coming generation will have little problems if he is successful.

So, one day when the other farmers woke up and went to their fields, Diwan was trying to make a road with chisel, hammer and rope.

All the other farmers laughed at him and said, "Diwan has gone Diwana (crazy)." But he did not listen. All he thought was that if he were successful people would benefit from his services.

And so after 10 years of hard work day and night he finally did make a road on the hill. The road was smooth and led straight to the market.

All people who had at first made fun of him were all praise. They were sorry for all the mocking they did. Diwan said,

"It is all right. No hard feelings. Now that we have a road everybody will have easy access to the market. We will be able to buy and sell things quickly, and everyone will have better profit. All I want to say is, "Work consistently and surely you will succeed."

Wise Words of Aristotle

- A flatterer is a friend who is your inferior, or pretends to be so.
- A friend is a second self.
- All human actions have one or more of these seven causes: chance, nature, compulsion, habit, reason, passion, and desire.
- All virtue is summed up in dealing justly.
- Education is the best provision for the journey to old age.
- Men acquire a particular quality by constantly acting a particular way... you become just by performing just actions, temperate by performing temperate actions, brave by performing brave actions.
- Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work.
- To give a satisfactory decision as to the truth, it is necessary to be rather an arbitrator than a party to the dispute.
- We are what we repeatedly do.
- Misfortune shows those who are not really friends.

Ahadith

- "He is not one of us who is not affectionate to the little ones, and does not respect the old; and he is not of us, who does not enjoin that which is lawful, and prohibits that which is unlawful."
(Tirmidhi, Kitab-ul-Birr Hadith No: 1944)

- "Whoever is kind, Allah تبارك وتعالى will be kind to him; therefore be kind to man on the earth. He Who is in heaven will show mercy on you."
(Abu-Daud, Kitab-ul-Adab, Hadith No: 4920)

- "Once a man who was passing through a road, found a branch of a tree with thorns, obstructing the road. The man removed the thorns from the way. Allah تبارك وتعالى accepted that from him and forgave his sins." (Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Azan, Hadith No: 615)

- "Allah تبارك وتعالى has revealed to me, that you must be humble. No one should boast over one another, and no one should oppress another."
(Muslim, Kitab-ul-Janat, Hadith No: 5109)

- "A Muslim who meets others and shares their burdens is better than one who lives a life of seclusion and contemplation."
(Tirmidhi, Shifat-ul-Qyama, Hadith No: 2431)

- "Serve Allah تبارك وتعالى, as you would if you could see Him; although you cannot see Him, He can see you. (Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Iman, Hadith No: 48)

- "Allah تبارك وتعالى does not look at your appearance or your possessions; but He looks at your heart and your deeds."
(Muslim, Kitab-ul-Birr, Hadith No: 4651)

- "The best richness is the richness of the soul."
(Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Rikak, Hadith No: 5985)

- "To strive for the cause of Allah تبارك وتعالى from daybreak to noon or from sunset to daybreak is better than the goods and enjoyment of the whole world." (Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Jihad, Hadith No: 2587)

Assalaamu Alaykum!

Abdullah Ibn Umar رضي الله تعالى عنه Ibn Al-Khattab, the son of Umar رضي الله تعالى عنه Ibn Al-Khattab loved saying salaam to people.

He had seen the Beloved Prophet ﷺ saying salaam to eveybody, young and old, rich or poor. He said salaam even to children playing in the way.

Abdullah رضي الله تعالى عنه loved the Prophet ﷺ very much, and loved to do exactly what the blessed Prophet ﷺ did himself. So he also would also said salaams to everyone he met.

Abdullah رضي الله تعالى عنه would go to the market everyday, around all the different bazaars, where other Muslims would be selling different things. But even though Abdullah رضي الله تعالى عنه had been going every day, he wouldn't buy anything. What was he doing, going to the market every day?

Abdullah رضي الله تعالى عنه would say salaams! He would greet the shopkeepers, and the men in the street. He would greet people sitting down, and people standing. He would greet any person he met, high or low in status.

Someone noticed this too, and asked Abdullah رضي الله تعالى عنه why he would go to the market everyday, but did not buy anything, "You come daily to the bazaar without fail, but you never buy or sell anything. You don't wander in and around the shops, or idly chat with shopkeepers. Instead, you always pass by the bazaar and go away again, without stopping anywhere. Why do you do this?"

"I go to the bazaar to offer salaam to the people!" replied Abdullah رضي الله تعالى عنه.

(Muatta, Jami-u-Salam, HadithNo: 1517)

One day, he was speaking about Bismillah (In the Name of Allah تبارك وتعالى). He told the people that they would get a lot of rewards for reciting Bismillah before doing anything.

There was a non-Muslim girl in the crowd. She was so impressed by the speech that she embraced Islam. Now, she also had a very good habit. She would say Bismillah before doing anything. It so happened that her father – who was not a Muslim – found out that she now believed in one Allah تبارك وتعالى.

Oh! You can just imagine how very upset he was! You see, he was the king's minister and was afraid that people wouldn't be too happy when they will hear about this. Her father started threatening her, hoping and wishing that she would give up Islam. But she wouldn't – because she loved this beautiful Islam.

In utter despair, her father tried to get rid of her. He went up to his daughter and gave her a ring. Now, this ring was a stamp that was used to seal all of the king's letters. Her father told her to keep the ring until he asked for it. She said Bismillah, took it and put it into her pocket.

Later that night, when the sky was pitch black and only the sound of the crickets could be heard, her father crept into her room and stole the ring.

You'd never believe what he did next! He threw it into a nearby river! He was a very cunning man and his plan was to see what the king would do to his daughter. He would have to punish her, wouldn't he?

Early the next morning, a fisherman arrived at the Minister's house. He had brought him some fish as a gift. The Minister thanked the fisherman and told his daughter to prepare the fish. So, she read Bismillah and began to clean the fish. Imagine how surprised she was when she saw a ring inside the fish. She was flabbergasted! It looked very familiar. In fact, it looked just like the ring which her father had asked her to look after!

She searched and searched for the ring, but couldn't find it! Reading Bismillah, she once again put the ring into her pocket.

At supper time, she served the fish to her father. Afterwards, he asked her to bring the ring. What did this girl do? Of course, she read Bismillah and took it right out of her pocket. It just didn't make any sense to him at all.

He sat down with his head in his hands and told her what he had done with the ring. He anxiously asked her where she had found it. She replied that while preparing the meal, she had found it in the fish's bally. She then related the entire incident – how she took the name of Allah تبارك وتعالى every time she did something.

When her father saw the blessings of Bismillah, he accepted Islam immediately, Alhamdulillah.

Nabil's White Shoes (Part 1)

Nabil looks into the paddy field and watches the tadpoles swimming. It is the planting season and the paddy field is flooded. Farmers are going to remove the seedlings from the seed beds and transplant them into the flooded fields. The warm, wet climate in the tropics is ideal for growing paddy. Meanwhile the tadpoles are having fun swimming in the empty field.

Nabil is waiting for his father to take him to the masjid. He can hear his father calling him, "Nabil, where are you?" Nabil replies, "I am coming, Baba." He rushes to the road to meet his father. As they start walking they hear a sound, squissh, squissh, squissh, squissh.

"What is this noise?" asks Nabil. They stop to listen, but the noise stops as well. As they start walking again, they hear the noise again, squissh, squissh, squissh, squissh. Again they stop to listen. Again the noise stops. They are very puzzled.

"Is someone following us?" asks Nabil, as he looks back. But no one is there. What could the noise be? Is it a bird in the sky or an insect in the paddy field? Again as they start walking they hear the noise.

Nabil looks down at his shoes and squeals in delight. "It's my shoes', they are wet and are making this squisshing sound." They both laugh gleefully. His father looks at Nabil's shoes and exclaims, "Nabil, there is a hole in your shoe. We need to buy you a new pair of shoes. Next week when I get some money, Insha Allah تبارك وتعالى, I will put aside some money for your shoes first." Nabil is very excited. Shopping for new shoes will be fun.

On Monday after school, Nabil asks his father,"Baba, can we go shopping for my shoes?" His father says, "Sabar (be patient), Nabil." Then Nabil says to his father,"Baba, today I saw my friend Azman wearing a nice pair of black shoes." His father says, "Alhamdulillah, that is what Allah تبارك وتعالى has given to him."

On Tuesday after school, Nabil asks his father again, "Baba, can we go shopping for my shoes?" His father says the same thing," Sabar, Nabil." Then Nabil says to his father,"Baba, today I saw Ustaz Marwan wearing a new pair of white shoes." His father says, "Alhamdulillah, that is what Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ has given to him."

On Wednesday after school, Nabil asks his father again, "Baba, can we go shopping for my shoes?" His father says, "Sabar, Nabil. Today I saw the postman wearing smart blue shoes."

This time Nabil says, "Alhamdulillah, that is what Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ has given to him."

On Sunday again Nabil says, "Baba, can we go shopping for my shoes?" His father says, "Yes, today after Salahul Zohr, Insha Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ, we will go and buy your shoes." Nabil performs his Salahul Zohr and quickly gets ready to go out shopping.

At the shoe shop, Nabil sees a nice pair of black shoes. "Baba, these shoes look very smart," says Nabil. His father says, "Yes, they look great, Nabil." His father looks at the price.

"Nabil, we can only spend $25 for your shoes. These shoes cost $55. It would be a waste to buy these expensive shoes. This is an extravagance. We would be spending an extra $30. Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ does not want us to be extravagant, Nabil. What do you think we can use the $30 for?"

Nabil's father then reads a verse of the Qur'an:

Surely, Allah does not like the extravagant

(Qur'aan chapter 6, verse 141)

"Okay, Ayah," Nabil says. We will not be extravagant." Nabil always obeys his father, he is an obedient child.

Nabil's White Shoes (Part 2)

Then Nabil sees a pair of brown shoes that look very nice. "Baba, these shoes are $27 only, can I buy them," asks Nabil. His father looks at the shoes and says,"Yes, Nabil, these shoes are just right for you."

As the salesman looks for the right size of shoes, Nabil wanders around the shop and soon sees a pair of white shoes that cost $17 only. He likes the shoelaces on them. There are little bells dangling at the end of the shoelaces.

"Baba, Baba," Nabil calls as he runs to the other side of the shop in excitement."Can I buy this pair of white shoes with the little bells on them? They are cheaper than the brown shoes; we will save money too. Do you know how much money we will save Baba?"

"Are you sure you want these shoes Nabil. I don't mind paying $27 for the brown shoes, if you want them," his father says.

"No, I don't want the expensive brown shoes. I want these white shoes which are cheaper. Baba, we must not waste money. Remember what Allah تبارك وتعالى says," Nabil reminds his father the verse from the Qur'an:

Surely, Allah does not like the extravagant

(Qur'aan chapter 6, verse 141)

His father smiles when Nabil finishes reading the verse. He says, "Well, Nabil, now you have a new pair of white shoes." Nabil replies, "Alhamdulillah, this is what Allah تبارك وتعالى has given me."

Nabil is very happy. He keeps looking at his new white shoes, smiles and keeps saying, "Alhamdulillah, Alhamdulillah."

On the way back, Nabil's father says, "Nabil you can have the $10 we saved by buying these white shoes. You can do what you want with it, but remember to do only those things that will earn you the pleasure of Allah تبارك وتعالى When Allah تبارك وتعالى brings rizq (provision) to us He also waits to see what we do with it. This $10 bill comes to you from Allah تبارك وتعالى."

Nabil's father reads a verse of the Qur'an:

Whatever blessing you have is from Allah.

(Qur'aan chapter 6, verse 141)

The next day Nabil is thinking of what he would like to do with all that money. It is a lot of money and he has never had so much before. At first he thinks he would like to spend all the money on ice cream or chocolates or even buy that toy car he has seen at the supermarket. Just the thought of it makes him very excited. But then he asks himself, "Will Allah تبارك وتعالى be pleased with me if I spend all the money on myself?"

Nabil's White Shoes (Part 3)

The next day, after school he sits down with his father and starts writing down his ideas. Nabil decides to use the money in five different ways. Nabil starts to think, "How much money is there for me to use for each way if I divide $10 into five ways?" Nabil sees that he has $2 to give his mother, whom he loves very much. He can spend $2 for himself, he can use $2 to buy treats for his brothers and sisters, he can save $2 and the last $2 he can give to the poor family who lives near the masjid. He says to himself, "Allah تبارك وتعالى will be pleased with me if I use the money in this way rather than if I spend it all on myself."

The next day, he goes with his mum to visit the poor family. When they reach the house they hear some children crying. Nabil and his mum say, "Assalaamu Alaikum, Meriam." Meriam comes out and replies, "Wa alaikumus Salaam." One little girl follows her and keeps saying, "I am hungry, mom. I am hungry, mom. Give me some food?"

Nabil's mother gives some old clothes to her. Nabil gives his $2. She is very happy and says, "Alhamdulillah." She immediately whispers to her son to go and buy a packet of rice so that she can cook it for his little sister. There is nothing in the house to eat. Even though she speaks very softly, Nabil and his mother can hear.

Nabil is very upset and shocked that there is nothing to eat in Meriam's house. At his house there is always something to eat. He puts his hand in his pocket and feels the balance of the money. He realizes that she needs the money to feed the family but he does not need the extra money. He decides to give the full balance of $8 to Meriam. He immediately sees her face light up even more as she keeps repeating,

"Alhamdulillah, Masha Allah." She tells her son to buy some more rice and dried fish. When they reach home, Nabil starts crying as he remembers the family who has no food in their house. His mother consoles him and says, "Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ sends rizq to whomever he chooses. Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ gives more to some and waits to see whether they will spend it all on themselves or will they share with those who are in need."

Nabil looks at his new shoes and says, "Alhamdulillah, I am glad I bought this pair of white shoes and saved $10 and therefore could give it to that family."

The Mice and the Elephant

Once upon a time there was a colony of mice which feared the elephants. Whenever the elephants walked through the mice's land with their enormous feet many mice were harmed.

One day, the mouse king went to the king of the elephants and said, "If you spare our lives, we will help you in time of need." The elephant king agreed. He ordered the elephants to be careful never to step on a single mouse.

From that day forth the elephants paid attention and lifted their huge legs carefully, never harming their tiny friends. If they entered the land of the mice, they lifted their trunks and trumpeted a warning; "We are coming. We are coming."

One day, elephant trappers came into the forest. They were seeking many elephants for the human king's soldiers to ride in battle. Day by day more and more elephants were caught.

The elephant king was very sad. Then, he remembered the promise of the mice and sent for his little friend, the mouse king. The king of the mice arrived and listened to the elephant's story.

Then the mouse king called all the mice together. Thousands and thousands of mice gathered to discuss how they might help the elephants. No one had forgotten how their huge friends had spared their lives. One clever mouse made a plan. All the mice rejoiced.

The mice formed little groups. The mice in each group gnawed the ropes of each trap with their tiny sharp teeth. By morning, all the elephants were freed. Frustrated, the captors left the forest. Everyone is important, and everyone is talented in a special way. We should not belittle others and be kind and generous because when we sell something we are paid in kind.

Fajr in the Masjid

A man woke up early in order to pray the Fajr prayer in the masjid. He got dressed, made his wudhu and set off for the masjid. On his way, the man fell and his clothes got dirty. He got up, brushed himself off, and headed home. Once home, he changed his clothes, made his wudhu, and was, again, on his way to the masjid.

On his way to the masjid, he fell again and at the same spot! He, again, got up, brushed himself off and headed home. At home, he once again, changed his clothes, made his wudhu and was on his way to the masjid.

On his way to the masjid, he met a man holding a lamp. He asked the man of his identity and the man replied, "I saw you fall twice on your way to the masjid, so I brought a lamp so I can light your way." The first man thanked him profusely and the two went together to the masjid.

Once at the masjid, the first man asked the man with the lamp to come in and pray Fajr with him. The second man refused. The first man asked him a couple more times and, again, the answer was the same. The first man asked him why he did not wish to come in and pray.

The man replied "I am Satan." The man was shocked at this reply. Satan went on to explain,"I saw you on your way to the masjid and it was I who made you fall. When you went home, cleaned yourself and came back on your way to the masjid, Allah تبارك وتعالى forgave all your sins. I made you fall a second time, and even that did not stop you, but rather, you came one more time to go to the masjid. Because of that, Allah تبارك وتعالى forgave all the sins of the people of your household. I was afraid if I made you fall one more time, then Allah تبارك وتعالى will forgive the sins of the people of your village, so I made sure that you reached the masjid safely."

So do not let Satan benefit from his actions.

Is there a God?

Once upon a time there was a king and he was a wise man too. In his kingdom there were some people who do not believe in the existence of God and some believe in one God firmly. In the court of the king there were many discussions often about the existence of God.

One day, the king being a wise man, arranged a great discussion. He called those who do not believe in one God and one of the wisest man who was a firm believer of the oneness of God for the discussion.

The date and time for the discussion was fixed. The king held his court at the appointed time on the appointed date. The non-believers assembled in his presence but the believing wise man did not come at the appointed time.

The people waited and waited till they lost their patience and uttered the words, "He has no arguments to advance in support of his conviction, so he will not come. He has lost, we have won."

At last, the wise man arrived and there was bustling in the court of the king. The people cried, "Why are you late? You have lost." The king asked him to explain the cause of his delay. The believing wise man explained, saying, "I started from my home in time, but when I came to the side of the river which I had to cross before reaching here, I did not find a single boat, by which I could cross and reach the opposite bank."

Upto this point the disbelieving men heard him patiently and did not say a single word. The believing man then continued, "I waited and waited till at last I saw some planks of wood coming out of the river."

And the unbelieving men began to shout, "O, It is a lie. It is unbelievable. It is unthinkable."

Continued the believing wise man, "Plank after plank, came out of the river and then I saw the planks were cut to proper size and shape and joined to each other with nails by themselves until they formed a boat. And then I took my seat in it and came over to the other bank. I am late because of the delay in the availability of the boat."

Amid a roar of the non-believing men, the believing wise man tried to convince them of the cause of the delay; but the opponents would not believe him. Then he said, "You do not believe what I say. It appears the story of the boat assembling by itself is something impossible for you to believe. Now in the name of justice, I ask you. Do you see the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars and the skies? Every thing is set according to a plan. But you say it came into existence without a Creator. In other words you deny the existence of God. How far is your statement reasonable and justified?"

This silenced them all and there was no answer to this. So the non-believers lost and the believer won.

The Cruel Woman and Her Cat
(Part 1)

There was once a woman who had a cat. She was a cruel woman and treated her cat badly.

One day the Prophet ﷺ told his friends a story about this bad woman.

"She did not look after the cat properly" he said. "She did not give it anything to eat or drink."

Because of this, the cat became very thin, and its fur began to fall out. The woman had a bad temper. When she was angry, she used to kick her cat or throw it out of the door and make it stay on the street all night.

Before long, the cat became very frightened of the woman. Every time the woman came near him, the cat cried and hid underneath a table or chair.The woman's neighbours were also angry with her. One day, a neighbour came to see her.

"You are very cruel to your cat!" the neighbour said. "It is one of Allah's creatures, just as we are! What you are doing is wrong!"

The woman was angry when she heard this.

"Go away!" she shouted at her neighbour. "The cat belongs to me. I will treat it badly if I want to! Go away and leave me alone!"

The neighbour was unhappy to hear this. Then, he thought of a plan to save the cat. He went back to his house and waited until night fell. Next door, he heard the cruel woman shouting at her cat,

"Get out of here, you dirty animal!" she shouted. "I will not have you in my house tonight."

The neighbour heard the cruel woman open her front door. Then, he heard the cat crying and howling as the woman threw it out onto the street. Then, the cruel woman slammed her door shut.

The neighbour waited for a few minutes to make sure the woman would not come out of her house again. Then, he went out into the street. There was the cat, sitting pitifully by the woman's front door, hoping the woman would open it and let him in. The neighbour's heart was filled with pity for the cat.

"You poor creature," he said. "Look how thin you are!" He bent down and picked the cat up. He stroked the cat's head and the cat stopped crying.

"I will take you to my house," the neighbour said, "and give you food."

The Cruel Woman and Her Cat

(Part 2)

When the neighbour got back to his house, he filled a plate with some food and gave it to the cat. The cat ate hungrily. Soon, the plate was empty. The neighbour filled the plate again. Again, the cat ate all the food very quickly. But at last, the cat had enough food and lay down on the floor to sleep.

The next morning, the cruel woman could not find her cat. She looked everywhere. She searched on the streets. She searched in the market. But the cat was nowhere to be found. The woman was very angry.

"Someone has stolen my cat" she said to herself. Then, she remembered what her neighbour had said the day before. He had tried to stop her treating her cat cruelly.

"That neighbour of mine has the cat!" she said. "He must be the one who has stolen it!"

So the woman went to her neighbour's house. She banged on the door and shouted angrily. The neighbour opened the door.

"I know you have stolen my cat!" the woman shouted at him. "You are a thief! Give it back to me at once!"

"No," said the neighbour, "you are a cruel woman and you do not deserve to have a cat!"

"I want that cat! Give it back," the woman shouted again. She was getting more and more angry.

"I will not give you your cat until you promise that you will treat it kindly" the neighbour replied.

When the woman heard that, she laughed to herself.

"Silly man!" she thought. "All I have to do is promise to treat my cat well, and he will give it to me!"

So, the woman pretended not to be angry any more. She smiled at her neighbour.

"Of course I will treat the cat well if you give it back to me!" she said in a friendly voice.

"You promise?" the neighbour demanded.

"Yes, yes, I promise," the woman replied.

"You will give the cat enough to eat and will not throw it out of the house at night?" the neighbour wanted to know.

"Of course not," the woman said sweetly. "I will feed the cat and look after it properly from now on. I will not be cruel to my cat ever again!"

Did the woman keep her promise? No, she did not. Unfortunately, though, the neighbour believed her, and did not think that she was telling lies. He gave the cat back to her.

The cruel woman took the cat back to her house and treated it more cruelly than ever before. She tied a rope round the cat's neck and then tied the rope to a chair.

Once again, she gave the poor cat nothing to eat or drink. The poor animal became thinner and thinner and weaker and weaker. After a short while, it died.

"What a terrible thing to do!" cried one of the friends of the Prophet ﷺ. "What a cruel and wicked woman!"

The Prophet ﷺ agreed. "This made Allah تبارك وتعالى very angry with the cruel woman" he told his friends.

Of course the woman was not only cruel. She had lied as well. She had committed a great sin because she had ill-treated one of Allah's تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ living creatures.

The woman who treated her cat cruelly was not forgiven for her sins, and so Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ sent her to Hell.

(Extracted from Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Musakat, Hadith No: 2192)

Blue Cheese (Part 1)

Munoo, the goat, stood in a field of white jasmine flowers that were blowing gently in the wind. She ripped the petals off with her teeth and chewed them up.

She loved to eat other things too, but jasmine was her favourite. The most fragrant and thickest bushes grew along the muddy banks of the river Nile.

During the day Munoo wandered closer to the swiftly flowing Nile to find the tastiest flowers. At night, she'd be taken into a shed and Farmer Maher would milk her. Her milk was always the creamiest, thickest, whitest milk of all Farmer Maher's goats.

One beautiful spring morning, Munoo arose from the pile of hay she slept on, happy about being alive, and happy that she could eat jasmine flowers.

She wandered down to the riverbank looking for some. She spotted a large clump and began to munch away. Hidden among the jasmine was a cluster of purple violets. Not seeing them, she reached for them and chewed a few of them.

"Yummy. This is the best jasmine I've ever tasted!" she said.

She bent over and pulled up a few more petals, then noticed the violets.

"So, that's what is so delicious. It's not just the jasmine. It's those purple flowers. They're yummy."

That whole day long the goat went up and down the riverbank looking for violets. She found many of them hiding in the grass and reeds, and she ate all of them.

That night, when she was taken into the shed to be milked, she was excited. She knew that the violets would make her milk much creamier.

When Farmer Maher began to milk her, he let out a scream. "Purple milk!" he cried. "I can't sell purple milk!"

Munoo looked down into the pail. The milk was as purple as the violets she'd munched on during the day.

"No more violets!" Farmer Maher ordered. Then he sent her to her pile of hay in the back of the shed.

The next morning, Munoo woke up to the rain pounding down on the roof of the shed. When she went outside, the raindrops pelted down on her, dripping into her eyes, her nose, and her mouth.

She walked over and stood under a thick-trunked pistachio tree. She stood there, watching the river flow by, wishing she could start munching away. She couldn't wait to chew on some jasmine petals. But it kept on raining for hours.

Munoo sat down and was soon so bored that she started looking at all the things near the tree, getting hungrier with every passing minute. She couldn't reach the leaves on the pistachio tree, or any of its seeds or nuts, and she couldn't eat the bark.

Then she noticed a flowering bush off to the side of the tree. It had brilliant green leaves and was covered with huge crimson roses. She stood up and wandered over to the bush. She could smell the fragrant flowers, and they looked so beautiful too. The rain drops cascaded down each delicate petal. When she touched them with her tongue, they felt like soft velvet.

She grabbed one in her mouth and chewed it up.

"Yummy," she said. "These are pretty good; almost as good as the violets." Farmer Maher had told her not to eat any more violets, but he hadn't said that she couldn't eat roses, so, forgetting about everything else, she munched down every single red rose on the bush.

Blue Cheese (Part 2)

By the time the rain had stopped, Munoo didn't feel hungry any more. She walked down to the river and stood there, basking in the sun.

That night she couldn't wait to be milked. She went to the shed and Farmer Maher began to milk her.

"Red milk! What is this?" he asked Munoo, showing her the milk in the bucket.

She looked down into the bucket. The milk was as red as the roses she'd eaten from the bush under the pistachio tree.

"I can't sell red milk either!" Farmer Maher said angrily. He slapped Munoo softly on the leg so she'd go to the back of the shed.

When she woke up the next morning she knew that she couldn't eat anything but the jasmine that grew along the riverbank, no matter what.

But when she neared the flowing waters of the Nile River, she saw that Farmer Maher had chopped all the tall grasses and jasmine bushes down. All that was left was stubble; lots of stubble. Munoo couldn't eat stubble. She'd not eaten anything since her rose petal meal the day before and was feeling very hungry. What was she to do? It would take days for the bushes to grow tall enough for her to eat.

That day, in a nearby field, she found and ate some yellow sunflowers. That night, her milk was yellow.

The day after that she ate some blue delphinium. That night, her milk was blue. And so it went, with orange bouganville, orange milk; pink carnations, pink milk.

Farmer Maher was getting angrier each night. Finally he told Munoo that he couldn't use her milk anymore. There would be no more cream, and no more cheeses. Who wants to eat blue cheese?

All night long Munoo stayed awake. She was so sad that her head hung down and her nose touched the dirt. She stood up all night, crying so much that her tears made a puddle around her feet. When the sun came up the following morning, Munoo, still feeling sad, wandered over to the riverbank. What she saw changed her frown into a smile.

She kicked her hind legs happily up into the air. Growing along the bank were the most tender looking, tall green grasses and little blossoming jasmine flowers that she'd ever seen. No more stubble!

She ate, and ate, and ate. She walked up and down the bank eating the petals off every flower.

That night she went into the shed. Farmer Maher was about to shoo her out but thought that he'd give her one more chance. He began to milk her. Out came the creamiest, richest, thickest, whitest milk he'd ever seen.

"Munoo, my sweet, sweet goat. Now that's my girl," he said, standing up and patting her long black hair softly.

As she stood there, watching the bucket fill with white milk, she knew that never again would she eat anything but jasmine flowers, no matter what! And she never did. Remember kids that we may think something as good for us but the truth may be different; things are only good the way Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى created them and we must not try to change that. Only Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى is perfect and our whims and fancies can land us in trouble.

The Boy and the Apple Tree

A long time ago, there was a huge apple tree. A little boy loved to come and play around it everyday. He would climb to the treetop, eat the apples and take a nap under the shadow...he loved the tree and the tree loved to play with him.

Time went by...the little boy grew up and no longer played around the tree every day. One day, the boy came back to the tree and he looked sad.

"Come and play with me," the tree asked the boy.

"I am no longer a kid, I do not play around trees any more," the boy replied. "I want toys. I need money to buy them."

"Sorry, but I do not have money... but you can pick all my apples and sell them. So, you will have money."

The boy was so excited. He grabbed all the apples on the tree and left happily. The boy never came back after he had picked the apples. The tree was sad.

One day, the boy who now had turned into a man returned and the tree was excited.

"Come and play with me," the tree said.

"I do not have time to play. I have to work for my family. We need a house for shelter. Can you help me?"

"Sorry, but I do not have any house. But you can chop off my branches to build your house."

So the man cut all the branches of the tree and left happily. The tree was glad to see him happy but the man never came back since then. The tree was again lonely and sad.

One hot summer day, the man returned and the tree was delighted. "Come and play with me!" the tree said.

"I am getting old. I want to go sailing to relax myself. Can you give me a boat?" asked the man.

"Use my trunk to build your boat. You can sail far away and be happy." So the man cut the tree trunk to make a boat. He went sailing and never showed up for a long time.

Finally, the man returned after many years.

"Sorry, my boy, but I do not have anything for you anymore. No more apples for you ..." the tree said.

"No problem, I do not have any teeth to bite" the man replied.

"No more trunk for you to climb on."

"I am too old for that now," the man said.

"I really cannot give you anything... the only thing left, are my dying roots," the tree said with tears.

"I do not need much now, just a place to rest. I am tired after all these years," the man replied.

"Good! Old tree roots are the best place to lean on and rest, come, come! Sit down with me and rest." The man sat down and the tree was glad and smiled with tears...

The world is full of deception; only the most trusted friends and relatives are the ones we can rely on. Parents are the gift of Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ and can be relied on most of all; we must be grateful to them and not leave them when we think we don't need them.

The Bitter Harvest (part 1)

I was a teacher in the Qur'anic learning circle at our neighborhood Masjid. I would see this young boy after Maghrib prayers; you might say he was about fifteen years old. He would always hold a pocket Qur'an and sit alone reading from it - no, he did not actually read from it, he just tried to make it seem as if he did.

Now and again, he would shyly steal a few glances at us, curious to know what we were doing. Once in a while, you might see him straining to make out what we were talking about.

Every time I caught his eye, he would avert his head and continue with his recitation, as if he had not intended to look this way.

Day after day, he sat in the same reserved manner, revealing the same timid glance. Finally after Isha Salah one day, I resolved to confront him.

"As Salaamu 'Alaykum, my name is Salman, I teach the Qur'anic learning circle in this Masjid."

"And my name is Khalid," He said.

Strange, he replied so fast, as if he had been waiting to share this piece of information for such a long time and expected to be asked.

"Where do you study Khalid?" I asked.

"In the eighth grade ... and I ... I love the Qur'an a lot."

Strange indeed, why did he add that last sentence?

Confidently, I asked him,

"Listen Khalid, have you got any free time after Maghrib? We would be honored to have you join us in the class."

"What? The Qur'an? The Halqah (the grour)? Yes ... why, yes of course (happiness overcame him). I'll be there, Insha Allah."

That night, I couldn't think of anything other than this young boy and the haze that surrounded his behaviour. Sleep would just not come.

I attempted to concoct an answer for what I saw and heard, but there was none. A verse of poetry came to mind:

"The coming days shall unravel the mystery,

And the news may appear from where you could never see."

I turned onto my right side and slipped my right hand under my cheek. O Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ, I have surrendered myself to You and to You I turn over my affairs.

The Bitter Harvest (Part 2)

Subhan Allah! How quickly days passed by. Khalid was now a regular attendant in our Qur'anic circle, energetic and successful in memorization. He was friends with everyone and everyone was friends with him. You could never catch him without a Qur'an in his hand or find him in any other line in Salah other than the first. There was nothing wrong with him except for his occasional long lapses of attention. There were times when his stony eyes would reflect the fathomless thought going on in his mind. Sometimes we knew his body was with us, but his soul was somewhere else, suffocating in another world.

Occasionally, I would startle him. All he had was a mumble to reply with. If he knew how it betrayed his inner state, he would have been the first to admit its fabrication.

One night, I walked with him after class to the beach shore. Maybe he could relax somewhat and release his distress and pain.

We arrived at the beach and traced the waves. The full moon was out there.

A strange sight indeed! The darkness of the night engulfed the darkness of the sea, with a moon lit in-between them. The rays of the silent moon rested on the silent waves of the sea. I stood behind the silent boy. Everything was silent.

Just then!

It all shattered and crushed to the ground as the young boy fell to the bottom, bleeding away his heart with tears. I chose not to interrupt Khalid's emotional release, perhaps the saltiness of his tears might help him relax and cleanse his distress.

"Your father? What is wrong with your father Khalid?"

"My father always warned me not to hang around with you people. He's afraid. He hates you all. And he always tries to convince me that I should hate you too. Any chance he gets, he tries to prove his point with stories and tales. But ... when I saw you people in the Halqah reciting Qur'an, I saw something entirely different. I saw the light on your faces, the light in your clothes, the light in your words, even in your silence, I could see the light. I doubted my father's tales and that is why I would sit after Maghrib, watching you, pretending that I was part of the circle, trying to share in the light."

"I ... I remember Ustadh Salman ... I remember the time you approached me after 'Isha prayer. I'd been waiting for that moment for such a long time. When I began the classes, my soul locked itself into a world of purity with your souls. I began the circle and was persistent. I wouldn't sleep. My days and nights became Qur'an. My father noticed the change in my routine. He found out, one way or another, that I had joined the circle and that I was now hanging out with 'terrorists'."

"Then, on a dark night... We were waiting for father to come home from the coffee shop, his daily ritual, so that we could all have dinner together.He entered the house with his hardened face."

"We all sat together at the dinner mat. Silence settled on the gathering as usual, all of us were afraid to speak in his presence. He knifed the silence with his roaring and immediate voice, "I heard you're hanging out with the fundamentalists." I was caught red. I could not utter a single word. All the words in my mouth attempted to come out at the same time. But, he didn't wait for the answer... He snatched the teakettle and

threw it maliciously at my face. The room spun and the colors united before my eyes. I stopped distinguishing the ceiling from the walls and fell on the floor.My mother held me."

"A damp cloth on my forehead reminded me of where I was. The vicious voice turned on my mother, "Leave him alone, or you'll be in the same lot." I crawled out of my mother's lap and whimpered away to my room. He followed me down the corridor with the cruelest curses."

"There was not a day that he didn't beat me in some way. Cursing, kicking, throwing, whatever was nearest to his hand. My body had finally become a shiver of fear, grotesque colors formed all over. I hated him."

"One day while we were sitting at the dinner mat, he said, "Get up, and don't eat with us." Before I could get up though, he pounced immediately and kicked me in the back, making me slam into the pots."

"At that moment, lying there on the ground, I pretended to stand taller than him and shout back in his face…"

"One day, I'll pay you back. I'll beat you just like you beat me, and curse you just like you cursed me. I'll grow up and become strong. And you'll get old and become feeble. And then … I'll treat you just like you treated me. I'll pay you back."

"After that, I left home and ran away. I just ran, anywhere, it didn't matter anymore. I found my way to this beach. It helped me wash away some of the sadness. I held my pocket Qur'an and began reciting until I could continue no longer because of my excessive crying."

"And here, a few of those innocent tears descended again, tears that sparkled under the moon like pearls under a lamp. I couldn't say anything. The surprise had arrested my tongue. Should I be aghast at this beast of a father, whose heart knew nothing about mercy? Or, should I be

amazed at this patient young lad, for whom Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ had wished guidance and faith."

"Or, should I be shocked at them both, at the father-son bond that had broken, causing their relationship to transform into that of a lion and a tiger, or a wolf and a fox."

I held his warm hand and wiped away a tear from his cheek. I reassured him, prayed for him, and advised him to remain obedient to his father. I told him to remain patient and that he was not alone. I promised that I would meet with his father, speak to him, and try to evoke his mercy.

The Bitter Harvest (Part 3)

That incident caused my anxiety to grow with each passing day. I tried thinking of ways to open Khalid's case with his father. How should I speak to him? How was I going to be convincing? To be frank, how was I even going to knock on his door? Then finally, I collected my courage, rehearsed my plan, and resolved that the confrontation ... uh, meeting ... would be that day at five o'clock.

When the time arrived, I left for Khalid's house with all my ideas and questions for his father dangling from my pockets.

I rang the doorbell. My fingers trembled and my knees were melting. The door opened. There he was, standing in the shadow with his frowned lips and veins pulsating with anger.

I tried beginning with a candid smile. Maybe it might smooth out some of the wrinkles before we even started.

He snatched my collar and jerked me towards him.

"You're the fundamentalist, who teaches Khalid at the Masjid, aren't you?"

"Well ... uh ... yes," I replied.

"God help me, if I ever see you walking with him again, I'll break your legs. Khalid won't be coming to your class anymore."

And then, he mustered all the saliva in his mouth and spat on my face. The door slammed behind it.

Slowly, I unfolded a tissue that was in my pocket, wiped what he had honoured me with, and retreated down the stairs consoling myself. Allah's Messenger ﷺ suffered more than this. They called him a liar,

cursed him, stoned him with rocks and caused his feet to bleed. They broke his teeth and placed dung on his back and expelled him from his house.

Day after day, month after month, there was no sign of Khalid. His father forbade him from leaving the house, even for the congregational prayer. He even forbade us from seeing or meeting him. We prayed for Khalid ... until we forgot about him. Years passed away.

One night, after the 'Ishâ' prayer, a shadow walked behind me in the Masjid and rested a familiar harsh hand on my shoulder. The same hand that held me years ago. The same face, the same wrinkles and the same mouth that honoured me with what I was not deserving of.

But ... something had changed. The savage face had shattered. The angry veins had subsided, belittled and still. The body looked tired of all the pain and conflict, weakened by sadness and grief.

"How are you?" I kissed his forehead and welcomed him. We took a corner of the Masjid. He collapsed on my lap sobbing.

Subhan Allah, I never thought that that lion would one day become a kitten.

"Speak up. What's wrong? How is Khalid?" I asked

"Khalid!" The name was like a dagger piercing his heart, twisting inside, and breaking off. His head slumped.

"Khalid is no longer the same boy that you used to know. Khalid is no longer the generous, calm and humble young lad."

"After he left your circle he befriended a pack of evil boys, ever since his childhood, he loved to socialize. They caught him at that time of life when a youth wants to leave the house."

"He began with cigarettes. I cursed him, beat him. But there was no use, his body had grown accustomed to the beatings, his ears were used to the curses."

"He grew quickly. He started staying up with them all night, not coming home until dawn. His school expelled him."

"Some nights he would come home to us speaking abnormally, his face loose, his thoughts confused, and his hands trembling."

"That body, which used to be strong, full, and tender, passed away. What remained was a feeble worn out frame. That pure face of his became transformed. It became dark and filthy. The scum of misguidance and sins clung to it."

"Those shy and simple eyes of his, changed. They shot fire as if everything he drank or took showed immediately in his eyes like some sort of punishment, in this life before the next."

"Hostility and disrespect replaced that shyness and cowardice he once knew. Gone was that soft, respectful young heart. In its place grew a hardened centre, like a rock, if not harder."

"Seldom would a day pass without incident. He would curse, kick, or hit me. Imagine it, my own son. I'm his father, yet he still hits me."

"After releasing all that, his eyes turned wet and bitter. But, he added quickly, "I beg you Salman, visit Khalid. Take him with you, you have my blessing, the door is open."

"See him sometime. He loves you. Register him in the Qur'anic study circle. He could even go with you on field trips. I have no objection. In fact, I am even willing to allow him to live in your home."

"The important thing, Salman … the important thing is that Khalid returns to the way he was."

"I beg you lad, I'll kiss your hands, warm your feet. I beg you and beg you…"

He collapsed, crying and wheezing, into the memories of the grief and pain. I allowed him to complete everything he had to say.

Then I addressed him, "Despite what has happened, let me give it a try and you must be hopeful. Brother, you planted this seed. And this is your harvest."

King Jahangir and the Baby

Jahangir was a wise and fair king. He was well loved by the people in his kingdom. Everyone knew that Jahangir would listen to their problems, no matter how small.

Outside his palace there was a special bell, with a great, thick rope. Anyone who wanted to talk to the king could simply come to the palace and ring the bell. Jahangir would hear the bell, and come to listen.

One fine sunny day two women arrived at the palace. They wanted the king's wise advice, so they rang the bell. Neither woman looked very happy. One of them was carrying a small child. The other woman was crying. Both told King Jahangir that the baby belonged to them.

The women stood before the king, hoping he would make a decision. But the king could not make a decision straight away.

Either woman might be the baby's mother. Both of them looked very upset.

King Jahangir thought for a while. Then he sent a servant to bring a sharp knife.

"I will settle the problem. I shall cut the baby into two pieces. Then you can have exactly half each."

One of the women began to cry and sob. She came and knelt before the king.

"Please do not cut my baby in half. Give him to the other woman, only do not harm him."

The King now knew the answer to his problem. He said to the woman, who was kneeling,

"It is easy to see that you are the baby's mother. Here, take your baby. Keep him safe."

Hasan Al-Basri and His Neighbour

Hasan al-Basri once fell sick. His neighbour, an unbeliever, came to pay him a visit.

"O Imam," he exclaimed, "I detect a bad smell." The Imam told him it was caused by illness, but the neighbour insisted,

"That is not the odour of sickness. It is a lavatory smell. For the love of Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ tells me what it is!"

He had not noticed that sewage was leaking from his house into that of the Imam.

When the neighbour pressed him, the Imam finally said, "For some months your drain has been seeping through to our side. I tried to fix it, but without success."

His neighbour asked why he had not told him before. The venerable Imam said, "I might have offended you."

The unbeliever was so impressed by this ethical refinement that he accepted the True Faith, for he recognized the Imam's morality as a ray of Islam.

A Lion, a Python and a Mouse

A story is told about a man who was strolling among the trees in a remote African jungle.

He was enjoying nature's beauty and listening to exotic birds sing while enjoying the smell of the wild jungle flowers.

Suddenly, he heard the unmistakable sound of an animal running with great speed. The sound grew louder and closer. As the man's heart jumped to his throat, he turned around to see a great and obviously very hungry lion running towards him.

He ran with all his might and the lion ran after him. Suddenly the man noticed an old well and quickly jumped into it. He clung to a rope that was hanging inside the well, which was used to fetch water.

When the lion's roaring subsided and the man was finally able to catch his breath, he heard a sound underneath him. He looked down to see a giant snake (or python) ... its mouth wide open, waiting for the man to drop right into it...

His mind raced to find a solution to this inescapable situation. As if this wasn't enough the man suddenly noticed two mice: one black and one white and they were chewing the rope above him! He started to shake the rope hoping to dislodge the mice and save himself. In doing so, the rope started swinging and the man started bumping into the walls of the well. Then he felt something sticky on his arm (as he hit the wall) and upon tasting it (would you have done that if you were in such a predicament?) he found out that it was honey and sweet as could be.

He tasted it again and again until he forgot the predicament he was in.

The man suddenly woke up. It was a very bad dream!

He decided to seek an interpretation for his dream and rushed to a scholar and Sheikh. The scholar laughed and interpreted the dream for him. He said,

"The lion was the Angel of Death; the well with the python was your grave; the rope was your life (clinging to it) and the mice were the day and the night eating away from your life..."

The man was shocked but then asked: "And what about the honey?"

The scholar answered, "It is the sweetness of this life that made you forget your ultimate end and what awaits you."

A difference at the Beach

A friend of mine was walking down a deserted beach at sunset. As he walked along, he began to see another man at a distance. As he grew nearer, he noticed that the native kept leaning down, picking something up and throwing it out into the water.

As my friend approached even closer, he noticed that the man was picking up starfish one at a time, that were thrown on the beach with the waves and he was throwing them back into the water.

My friend was puzzled. He approached the man and said, "Good evening, friend. I was wondering what you are doing."

"I'm throwing these starfish back into the ocean," said the man. "You see, it is low tide right now and all of these starfish have been washed up onto the shore. If I don't throw them back into the sea, they'll die up here from lack of oxygen."

"I understand," my friend replied, "but there must be thousands of starfish on this beach. You can't possibly get to all of them. There are simply too many. And don't you realize this is probably happening on hundreds of beaches all up and down this coast. Can't you see that you can't possibly make a difference?"

The native man smiled, bent down and picked up yet another starfish, and as he threw it back into the sea, he replied,"Made a difference to that one...... didn't I?"

There are millions of little things we can do, without making much effort, to make this world a better place.

The Mouse and the Camel

A little mouse once caught in its paws a camel's head-rope and in a spirit of emulation went off with it. Because of the nimbleness with which the camel set off along with him the mouse was duped into thinking himself a champion. The flash of his thought struck the camel.

"Go on, enjoy yourself," he grunted. "I will show you!" Presently the mouse came to the bank of a great river, such as would have cast down any lion or wolf. There the mouse halted.

"Comrade over mountain and plain," said the camel, "why this standing still? Why are you dismayed? Step into it like a man! Into the river with you! You are my guide and leader; do not halt half-way, paralysed!"

"But this is a vast and deep river," said the mouse. "I am afraid of being drowned, comrade."

"Let me see how deep the water is," said the camel, and quickly set foot in it.

"The water only comes up to my knee," he went on, "Blind mouse, why were you dismayed? Why did you lose your heart?"

"To you it is an ant, but to me it is a dragon," said the mouse. "There are great differences between one knee and another. If it only reaches your knee, clever camel, it passes way up over my head."

"Be not so arrogant another time," said the camel, "lest you are consumed body and soul by the sparks of my wrath. Emulate mice like yourself; a mouse has no business to hobnob with camels."

"I repent," said the mouse. "For God's sake get me across this deadly river!"

"Listen," said the camel, showing compassion to the mouse. "Jump up and sit on my hump. This passage has been made easy for me; I can take hundreds of thousands like you across it."

If you are not the ruler, be a simple subject; if you are not a captain, do not try to steer the ship.

Four Men in the Masjid

Four men entered a masjid and each busied himself in salah, humbly prostrating before Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى.

Each one said, "Allahu Akhbar" after first having made his intention, and began to pray with humility.

Meanwhile the Mu'adhin came in and gave the call to salah.

The first man blurted out to the Mu'adhin,"Are you calling to the prayer? Are you sure it is the right time?"

The second spoke on the spur of the moment, "You have nullified your salah by speaking during prayers!"

The third retorted, "Why did YOU speak? Tell your OWNSELF how to behave!"

The fourth mumbled, "Praise be to Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى! I wasn't a party to their arguments."

Thus all the four broke their salah and wasted it. The fault-finders went more astray than the one who made the original mistake.

The Shipwreck

The only survivor of a shipwreck was cast away on a small, uninhabited island.

He prayed feverishly for Allah t to rescue him, and every day he scanned the horizon for help, but none seemed forthcoming.

Exhausted, he eventually managed to build a little hut out of driftwood to protect him from harsh weather and to store his few possessions.

But then one day, after scavenging for food, he arrived home to find his little hut in flames, the smoke rolling up to the sky. The worst had happened; everything was lost. He was stunned with grief and anger. "Allah t how you could do this to me!" he cried.

Early the next day, however, he was awakened by the sound of a ship that was approaching the island. It had come to rescue him. "How did you know I was here?" asked the weary man of his rescuers. "We saw your smoke signal," they replied.

It is easy to get discouraged when things are going badly. But we shouldn't lose heart, because Allah t is at work in our lives, even in the midst of pain and suffering. Remember, the next time your little hut is burning to the ground-it just may be a smoke signal that summons The Grace of Allah تبارك وتعالى.

The Trick

A young man, a student in one of the universities, was one day taking a walk with a professor, who was commonly called the student's friend because of his kindness to his students.

As they went along, they saw lying in the path a pair of old shoes, which they supposed belonged to a poor man who was employed in a field close by and who had almost finished his day's work.

The student turned to the professor, saying, "Let us play with the man a trick: we will hide his shoes, and conceal ourselves behind those bushes, and wait to see his perplexity when he cannot find them."

"My young friend," answered the professor, "we should never amuse ourselves at the expense of the poor. But you are rich, and may give yourself a much greater pleasure by means of this poor man. Put a coin in each shoe, and then we will hide ourselves and watch how this affects him."

The student did so and they both placed themselves behind the bushes close by. The poor man soon finished his work, and came across the field to the path where he had left his coat and shoes.

While putting on his coat he slipped his foot into one of his shoes, but feeling something hard, he bent down to feel what it was, and found the coin. Astonishment and wonder were seen upon his face. He gazed upon the coin, turned it around, and looked at it again and again.

He then looked around him on all sides, but no person was to be seen. He now put the money into his pocket, and proceeded to put on the other shoe; but his surprise was doubled on finding the other coin.

His feelings overcame him; he fell upon his knees, looked up to the heaven and uttered aloud a fervent thanksgiving in which he spoke of his wife who was sick and helpless, and his children without bread, whom this timely bounty, from some unknown hand, would save from perishing.

The student stood there deeply affected, and his eyes filled with tears.

"Now," said the professor, "are you not better pleased than if you had played your intended trick?"

The youth replied, "You have taught me a lesson which I will never forget. I feel now the truth of these words, which I never understood before,

"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

A Pond Full of Milk

Once there was a king who told some of his workers to dig a pond. Once the pond was dug, the king made an announcement to his people saying that one person from each household was to bring a glass of milk during the night and pour it into the pond. So, the pond should be full of milk by the morning. After receiving the order, everyone went home. One man prepared to take the milk during the night. He thought that since everyone would bring milk, he could just hide a glass of water and pour it inside the pond. Because it will be dark at night, no one will notice. So he quickly went and poured the water into the pond and came back. In the morning, the king came to visit the pond and to his surprise the pond was only filled with water! What happened was that everyone thought,

"I don't have to put the milk, someone else will do it."

Dear friends, when it comes to helping the religion of Allah t do not think that others will take care of it. Rather, it starts from you. If you don't do it, no one else will do it. So, change yourself to the way of Allah t to serve Him and that will make the difference.

Birbal's Intelligence Saves Him

Akbar was a very famous Mughal emperor. He had a minister called Birbal in his court. Birbal was known for his witty answers, and Akbar liked him more than any other minister for the same reason.

All the other ministers were jealous and thought of a plan to get Birbal out of the way. Then they went to the King's barber and told him that if he would help them, he would be rewarded handsomely. One of them even promised that they will make him a minister if Birbal was out of their way. The barber was greedy and agreed readily.

And so the plan set out . . . .

One day, while cutting the king's hair, the barber thought that it was the right moment. He started praising Akbar's father (whom he had served when he was alive), and the rest of the family who had died. Then he said, "O king! You have so much wealth and luxury. Why don't you think of your dead father? Why don't you give some of your wealth to him?"

Akbar got annoyed, "How can I send him anything when he is dead?" This was the chance! The barber said, "This is what I mean your Highness! I know a magician who can send people to heaven through the smoke of fire. All you need is a person who is witty and intelligent enough to be able to go to heaven and return after talking to your father."

Akbar said, "Since you know so much, who, do you think will be the best person?" the barber replied instantly, "Who else you majesty, only Birbal your minister is fit to do this."Akbar was concerned, "But the fire might burn him."

The barber replied, "No, O king. The magician knows a spell which will make him turn into smoke and fly to the heaven."

So the king went to Birbal and ordered him to prepare for the journey to heaven. Birbal asked the king, "Your Highness! Who was it who told you of such a great idea? And who is it who cares so much for the departed soul of your father?"

Akbar replied, "Who else but my faithful barber." Birbal said, "He really is faithful to be so concerned for you and your father. I am ready to go, but I need a huge amount of money for such a long journey and I want one month for settling my family for the time I will be gone." The king accepted Birbal's conditions.

Birbal gathered some of his faithful servants and friends, and told them to dig a tunnel from the place where the fire would be lit to his home.

After one month, Akbar, his ministers, the barber, the fake magician, and Birbal gathered at the place. Birbal went on and stood over the tunnel. The fire was lit and the fake magician started chanting some silly made-up words. Birbal jumped into the tunnel and went straight to his home. The ministers were all very happy to get rid of Birbal.

For many months Birbal hid in his home till his hair grew so large that it looked as if he had never got his hair cut all his life. Meanwhile, his family used the huge amount Akbar had given Birbal, for living.

Then one day Birbal set out to the court. The guards stopped him as they did not recognize him. He said, "I am Birbal, and I have to meet the king." Akbar, the king was very happy to see Birbal back again. He asked him about what happened in heaven.

Birbal replied, "Your Highness! I met your father in heaven; he is fine and sends you his greetings. I asked him if he needed anything but all he said was that they have everything in heaven and even more than what

he had on Earth. The only thing your father wants is that he told me to send the barber as there are no barbers in heaven. He told me that he wants the best barber. All the barber's needs will be provided for. He asked to send the best barber in the kingdom as soon as I reach earth."

Birbal continued, "As you can see your majesty. Even I could not get my hair cut in heaven and they grow so quickly over there that in just months I am looking like a savage."

King Akbar summoned the barber immediately, and told him the whole story. The barber had no choice, for he could not reveal the truth because that would have brought upon him the king's anger and he would have been killed anyway.

From then onwards, nobody ever tried to mess with the witty Birbal.

The Rise of Islam (Part 1)

For the first three years of his Prophethood, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, preached secretly to his family and relatives. Then Allah تبارك وتعالى commanded him to preach Islam publicly. The majority of the Makkans (who were pagan idolaters) were very angry and started persecuting the Muslims very much. Only a few became Muslims, but those Muslims were very strong in their belief, so the number of Muslims continued to grow. When persecution became unbearable, some Muslims migrated to Abysinnia (now Ethiopia), where a Christian king provided protection for the Muslims and later became a Muslim himself.

(Nabi-e- Rehmat, pages 142 to 162)

Madinah

Life in Makkah became so unbearable, that Allah تبارك وتعالى commanded the Muslims to migrate to Madinah, where the majority of people had become Muslims. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, migrated to Madinah in his 13th year of Prophethood (622 CE).

In Madinah, the Muslim state was established under the leadership of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The Muslims were free to pray on their own, etc. The Makkan idolaters did not like that and they attacked the Muslims in Madinah several times to crush Islam. But the Muslims resisted attack after attack. Finally a peace treaty was drawn up that was in favour of the unbelievers. Though the peace treaty was in their favour, the unbelievers went against the treaty by helping their ally in attacking one of the Muslims' allies. But, the Muslims had grown very strong by now, and since the treaty was nullified by their act, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ decided that it was time to conquer Makkah and cleanse the Ka'aba of all the idols put in it. All the preparations were done secretly and no news about that reached Makkah. (Nabi-e- Rehmat, pages 250 to 370)

Conquest of Makkah

During the 8th year after the migration from Makkah, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ left for Makkah. Upon arriving in Makkah, the army had reached an enormous number of ten thousand. Many of the unbelievers had become Muslims and the tables had turned. The Muslims had become very strong by now. The Makkans were very afraid of the Muslims. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ could have easily killed every single person in Makkah who had tortured and oppressed the Muslims for so long, but he was a man of peace and mercy. He ordered the Muslims not to fight unless they were attacked.

He told the Makkans that whoever closed their doors, laid down their arms, took refuge by the Kaaba, or entered Abu Sufyan's house (who was one of their leaders) would be safe. The whole entry into Makkah was peaceful. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ destroyed all the idols in the Ka'aba. He then turned to the Makkans and asked them what treatment they would expect from him. They replied, You are a noble brother and a noble cousin.

Then Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, "Go, for you are free." Most of the Makkans became Muslims that day. (Nabi-e- Rehmat. pages 429 to 445)

Last Pilgrimage

After that, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ went back to Madinah. Many delegations of various tribes kept on coming to Madinah to become Muslims. In the 10th year after migration from Makkah, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ left for Makkah with one hundred and fourteen thousand of his followers for his farewell pilgrimage. There, on the plain of Arafat near the Mount of Mercy he delivered his last sermon.

After the pilgrimage, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ went back to Madinah. Almost the whole of Arabia had now become Muslim and was

under his rule. In the 11th year after the migration from Makkah, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ became ill. After an illness that lasted 13 days, Prophet Muhammad, s, breathed his last on 12 Rabi-ul-Awwal (Rabi-ul-Awwal is an Islamic lunar month). He was 63 years old the time he passed away. (Nabi-e-Rehmat, page 545)

The Rise of Islam (Part 2)

Hazrat Abu Bakr رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ

After Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ demise, Abu Bakr رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ became the Caliph, or successor to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The first challenge he faced was from the people who had refused to pay Zakat and some false claimants of Prophethood. He dealt with them strongly and all of those people were defeated.

Abu Bakr رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ also took steps against the Persian Empire that was a constant danger to the Muslims. It had helped the people who had rebelled against Islam. In the first battle against the Persians, the Battle of Chains, the Muslims emerged victorious while the Persians suffered a humiliating defeat. Thousands of Persians were killed and taken captive. Next, the Muslims fought the Battle of Mazar against the Persians. Again the Muslims won. In the battles of Walaja and Ulleis, too, the Muslims won the battles against the Persians. They also conquered the kingdom of Hira. The Muslims also conquered a fort named Ein-at-Tamr.

The Muslims also fought against the Byzantines. In the battle of Basra, the Muslims emerged victorious against the Byzantines. So were they victorious against the Byzantines in the Battle of Ajnadein. Muslims fought these battles to terrify the enemies so that they do not plot against the interests of Islam and Muslims. The Muslims also laid siege to Damascus, which was lifted because of the demise of Hazrat Abu Bakr رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ.

Hazrat Umar رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ

Haztat Umar رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ became the next Caliph after Hazrat Abu Bakr's demise. Umar رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ continued the war against the Persians because of the continuous troubles they were causing for the Muslim

State. The Muslims fought the Battle of Namarraq against the Persians. The Muslims won this battle. After that the Battle of Jasr took place. In that battle, the Muslims were defeated. Then the Muslims fought the battles of Buwaib, Qadisiya, and Jalula. The Muslims won in all of these battles. The Muslims also conquered Madain, Shustar, and Jande Sabur. Then came the Battle of Nihawand. This was one of the most decisive battles in history and it sealed the fate of the Persian Empire. It also proved to be the gateway for Muslims to Persia.

Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ also fought against the Byzantine Empire. The Muslims conquered Syria after the Battle of Yarmuk. The Muslims then conquered Jerusalem and Egypt.

In Russia, the Muslims conquered Azerbaijan and Tabaristan.

The Rise of Islam (Part 3)

Hazrat Uthman رضي الله تعالى عنه

During the rule of Uthman رضي الله تعالى عنه, there were uprisings in Persia and in Byzantine. Hazrat Uthman رضي الله تعالى عنه crushed these revolts and made his grip on the territories firmer. During his rule, the Muslims conquered the whole of North Africa. It included countries now known as Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. The island of Cyprus was also conquered during his time.

Campaigns were also sent against Khurasan (in present-day Iran), Armeain, and Asia Minor (now Turkey).

Muawiyah رضي الله تعالى عنه

During the rule of Muawiyah رضي الله تعالى عنه, the Muslims founded the city of Qairowan in Tunisia. They conquered Kabul, captured the island of Rhodes, and occupied Samarkand (in present-day Uzbekistan) and Tirmiz. Campaigns were sent in Khurasan (in present-day Iran). Bukhara (in present-day Uzbekistan) became a depandent state.

Factors That Led to This Rise

The Muslims spread the light of Islam at lightning speed. Within half a century after the demise of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, three continents had come under the Islamic rule and the two great empires of the time, the Persian and the Roman, had been defeated. It was their faith, character, and courage that were responsible for this phenomenal achievement.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ had left a great number of trained companions. The Muslims knew they were fighting for the sake of Allah تبارك وتعالى and for conveying the message of Tawhid, so they did not plunder the lands that they acquired nor did they treat the citizens of the

conquered lands harshly. They were brave, courageous, and not afraid of dying.

They were not greedy people or people seeking worldly pleasures. Rather they were very generous people, often leaving themselves with hardly anything while fulfilling the needs of others. The commanders of great armies that conquered the Persian Empire, etc. were not the least bit different from the soldiers in their army regarding their lifestyle. Their way of living was simple. Their clothes were just enough to cover them and their food was scanty. Often they went hungry for many days. If they got food, it would be no more than a piece of bread or dates and some water. Their clothes would have so many patches on them.

In stark contrast to the pomp and show of both the Persian and the Roman empires, the Caliphs' lifestyles were no different from the citizens. Often, when a dignitary from a different empire would come to meet the Caliph, he would have a hard time recognizing the Caliph because he was the same as a normal citizen. The Caliphs kept no guards and did not feel a bit insulted in washing their own clothes and mending their own shoes or doing work for others such as milking the neighbour's goats, etc.

They were very kind to the people of the lands they conquered. They never destroyed any temple or church after conquering the place where the temple or church was. They were extremely just. They only resorted to war if it was inevitable. Often they would sign treaties assuring the subjects of total safety. Only the subjects would have to pay a small amount of tax called Jizyah for the protection they were getting from the Muslims. At the same time, they were exempted from paying Zakat and participating in military campaigns.

The Muslims' character impressed many and a lot became Muslims after observing their character. No person became a Muslim under compulsion. The people converted only because they wanted to.

The First Alien (Part 1)

Commander Nabeel swallowed uneasily and glanced up at Waseem. He was a commander of the Earthship-5

The radars had detected a U.F.O two hours ago. The records on the computer did not find the U.F.O and started blinking "U.F.O" on the screen.

So, regretfully, Waseem from the control room had to inform Commander Nabeel about it.

"Waseem, are you sure the information is correct? Did you ask the earth home database for records?"

Nabeel said, "We have to tell everyone that we have finally confronted a U.F.O!"

Waseem removed his glasses and brushed back his short, brown hair and said, "Commander Nabeel, I've done everything I can. Our communication devices are not working. I don't have any idea what's wrong with them. I have never encountered a problem like this all my life!"

Nabeel hung his head in frustration.

"We have got to tell the Earth base about this!"

Once the Earthship-5 got close to the U.F.O, it was clear that it was not a spaceship made on Earth. The metal used in making it was never seen on Earth before, neither on the moon!

Nabeel, could not communicate because none of the devices were working properly. A small white pod came out of the U.F.O and landed on Earthship-5 with a loud thud.

Waseem and Nabeel could see a strange creature controlling the small pod like spaceship.

"Do you think they want to kill us?" Waseem asked.

"I don't know. Maybe they only want to look for new life like we do. I sure hope I'm right." Nabeel said.

Meanwhile, the Alien in the pod was knocking on Earthship-5 entrance. Nabeel told Waseem, "Please see, if it looks alright, and then open the door."

The First Alien (Part 2)

Waseem thought it wouldn't be able to harm them as it had no weapons so he opened the door. It came inside.

Nabeel noted that the creature had no legs and arms. Instead it had an elephant-like trunk to touch and feel things. It did not walk but crawled and hopped. It seemed as if it did not need to breathe or use oxygen for breathing, because it wore no gas mask. It had no eyes, mouth or nose. Apparently it ate through the hole in its elephant-like trunk.

Nabeel said, "Greetings creature! We mean no harm. That is if you can understand our language."

A voice came out of the trunk-like thing, "Well! We have observed that you do not intend peace or friendship."

Nabeel exclaimed, "What do you mean?"

The creature said, "You earth creatures are fighting with each other. How can you be our friends?"

"But that is not my fault, I too don't like fighting," Nabeel said. "You humans behave like spoiled little brats! You can't handle even one planet! And unfortunately for earth creatures, the United Nation of All creatures has unanimously agreed, that you cannot handle your planet with care. So we will destroy the whole of earth with all its creatures tomorrow. And your ship, Earthship-5 right now!"

Waseem finally screamed in desperation, "That's the kind of violence you were just protesting against!"

"Yes, but . . . you all deserve it!!"

Nabeel felt the ground moving from under his feet. Just moments ago he was thinking that he would become the first inter-galactic ambassador, the first person to speak to alien creatures. But now!

Waseem and Nabeel were going to faint, when suddenly the creature yelled, "Hey! Caught you there, brother." What! This couldn't be. It was Nasir the Earth's most famous comedian's voice. Now they understood a little bit of what was going wrong.

Nasir took off his costume and started speaking, "You two are so easy to fool. What you just saw, I mean the U.F.O and all was just a video playing on your screen. And how will the communication devices work when they are switched off. And the costume was specially made by Tariq, the famous tailor. How could you two fall into the trap when the whole world knows there are no other creatures in the universe-X other than ...."

Nabeel and Waseem were running after Nasir before he could finish his sentence!!!

Sayings of Rasullah ﷺ

- Jannat lies under the feet of your mother.

  (Kanz-ul-Ummal, 461/16, Hadith No: 45439)

- One who reads the kalimah with firm conviction, hell will become haram on him. (Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Ilm, Hadith No: 125)

- The dust which settles on a man's body while he is in the path of Allah t not only fire but the smoke of Jahannum is haraam on those parts of the body. (Al-Sunan-ul-Kubra, 10/3, Hadith No: 4318)

- I curse three types of people: Those who don't look after their parents in old age, those who do not take full advantage of the month of Ramadhaan, those who don't send Durood on me when my name is spoken. (Mustadrak-e-Hakim, Kitab-ul-Birr, Hadith No: 7356)

- An intelligent person is one who is always thinking and preparing for death. (Tirmidhi, Al-Zuhud, Hadith No: 2383)

- Fear the prayer of the wronged, for, verily, there is no veil between him and Allah تبارك وتعالى. (Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Zakat, Hadith No: 140)

The Fox and the Stork

A selfish fox once invited a stork to dinner at his home in a hollow tree. That evening, the stork flew to the fox's home and knocked on the door with her long beak. The fox opened the door and said, "Please come in and share my food."

The stork was invited to sit down at the table. She was very hungry and the food smelled delicious! The fox served soup in shallow bowls and he licked up all his soup very quickly. However, the stork could not have any of it as the bowl was too shallow for her long beak. The poor stork just smiled politely and stayed hungry.

The selfish fox asked, "Stork, why haven't you taken your soup? Don't you like it?" The stork replied," It was very kind of you to invite me for dinner. Tomorrow evening, please join me for dinner at my home."

The next day, when the fox arrived at the stork's home, he saw that they were also having soup for dinner. This time the soup was served in tall jugs. The stork drank the soup easily but the fox could not reach inside the tall jug. This time it was his turn to go hungry. We should be kind and considerate, and not act in mean and selfish ways. Only when we are good will the world be good to us.

Sincerity for Allah

During the time of Hazrat Umar's رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ Caliphate, a war was going on in a land known as "Farus", now a part of Iran. Hazrat Umar رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ asked Hazrat Jurair رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ to take his tribe with him and fight. Whatever the Muslims win, one-fourth of it will be awarded to him.

Off Hazrat Jurair رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ went fighting and the Muslims collected a lot of things in the war. Now Hazrat Jurair رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ went to Hazrat Saad Bin Abi Waqqas رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ and demanded his one-fourth share. Hazrat Saad رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ wrote a letter to Hazrat Umar رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ informing him about Hazrat Jurair's رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ demand. In reply Hazrat Umar رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ wrote that Jurair is stating the truth and he had offered him the deal. However, tell him that if he fought for money then he can be paid for it as agreed but if he fought the war for Allah تبارک وتعالیٰ and His beloved صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم then he should be considered a common Muslim and should be paid accordingly.

When Hazrat Saad رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ received the letter he informed Hazrat Jurair رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ about its contents. Hazrat Jurair رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ replied that Amir-ul-Momeenin رضی اللہ تعالیٰ عنہ is correct; I do not need the one-fourth share. I am a common Muslim and I would like to remain as such.

(Mukhtasar Tarikh-e-Damishk 268/2)

Blessings of Salah

Akhtar sported a thick beard and always wore shalwar kameez. He ran a shop in the chemical and paint market. He was the only shopkeeper who would close his shop for salah. All the other shopkeepers used to make fun of him, they thought he lost many customers by closing the shop and going for salah.

One day, a very rich man parked his car in front of Akhtar's shop. He introduced himself, "My name is Mubeen Shiekh, and I am the owner of a large construction company. I need to buy chemicals and paints for 3 million rupees." Akhtar was very pleased to know that he will have the biggest sale of his life.

He replied, "Mubeen Sahib, I will be pleased to finalize the deal with you. But as you can hear the Zuhr Azaan being called out, we can talk the details after Salah." Mubeen Shiekh was surprised and angry. He was in a hurry and said, "Mr! I cannot wait for you to return back from your Salah. If you can make the deal now then well and good. Otherwise there are many other shops who would accept my deal."

"As you wish, but I cannot miss my salah and spoil my Hereafter for this mortal world," Akhtar said as he dropped the shutter and went away to the nearby masjid.

After Salah Akhtar prayed, "O Allah, I will get only what You have allotted for me. The 3 million's deal could have boosted my financial condition but I prefer to come and stand in front of You instead of making You angry by running after this world. I ask for Your mercy and forgiveness because it is only You who gave me the guidance to come to You, rejecting the glitters and wealth of this mortal world." With this Akhtar went back to his shop only to find Mubeen Shiekh standing there waiting for him.

Mubeen said, "I am sorry. At first I was angry at your attitude. But then I realised that I was being very rude. I surveyed the whole market but I only found you reliable."

At the end of the day Akhtar was rewarded by Allah Ta'ala for remembering Him regularly five times a day not only through the 3 million rupees deal but also by making him a source of inspiration for Mubeen Shiekh who then became a regularly praying man.

Yasir and the Idiot Box

Yasir was always watching television, ever since his parents brought it to watch news. He used to be a good boy, was the best in sports, studies and manners. But since he started watching T.V. his habits were being spoiled day by day. He wouldn't make his bed, he was rude to his parents, family, friends and teachers. He even stopped going to masjid except on Fridays.

All he did was watch movies and cartoons on T.V. with his books on the table and his lap. And so it happened, he failed miserably in his final exams. He was feeling horrible inside, his parents scolded him and blamed his addiction to T.V. for the bad results. He felt like crying, he locked himself up in the lavatory and cried for half an hour. He did not feel like eating or watching T.V. or playing.

In the evening, his uncle came home with Yasir's cousins. But as soon as he found out about the whole matter, he called Yasir and sat him. He said, "For the past seven months I have noticed that you have lost all manners and you do not study. All you do is watch T.V. Son, remember that T.V. does not make you feel good; you only get more annoyed and frustrated after watching T.V. It is bad for the eyes, brain and the body. Do you know a small sparrow would get blind or even die if it were made to watch T.V. for 5 minutes! Look what T.V. has done to you!"

Then Yasir's uncle turned to his father and said, "Bhaijan, T.V. is not only bad for the health, it also spoils children's habits. If you want to know about what is happening in the world you should have newspapers available for this purpose. If you watch T.V. then how will you tell your children to stop watching it? It is the same with all other sins, in fact they will then talk back to you."

Yasir's father realised the mistake he had made by bringing the T.V. in his home. He resolved, "I am going to throw away this idiot box for good! I will not sell it to someone else and spoil his or her family."

Khalid's Evening of Surprises

The end of day was fast approaching, Khalid was very anxious to get home before it was too late. He was standing in the bus, which was stuffed with other workers just like a greedy kid stuffs his mouth with chocolates.

Khalid was worried not because it was his first day at work, and the very first job was far from home in the industrial area. He was excited to work at the huge washing machine factory because he hadn't seen a factory from the inside. Life was quite tough for him, since his father had mysteriously disappeared and he had to leave school to earn money. For one month his mother spent the money she had saved for him, but now there was no more money. Khalid was lucky in the sense that he got employment in the first place where he had applied for a job. It was easy for his age; a 12-year-old kid can easily tighten screws. The daily wage was good too. He was getting Rs. 120 per day for working from 9 in the morning to 7 in the evening. The problem was that if he didn't get the money home quickly, his mother wouldn't be able to buy anything for cooking, and he wouldn't have anything to eat. After working for the whole day he was feeling extremely hungry.

Finally the bus stopped near his home and he got down. He walked home thinking that Allah Ta'ala had helped him in such a difficult situation, and his father would have been very proud of him for earning such a good salary. He planned to buy something to cook for the next day also, so he wouldn't have to worry about rushing home. He put his hands in his pocket to buy some potatoes, onions and bread, but he couldn't find the money! He had been robbed of his hard earned money.

[We must abstain from robbing because as we can see even a small thing can mean the whole world to someone.]

He was depressed to lose his hard earned money and the very thought of starving the following night was intolerable. The thought of his mother depressed him even more. He lifted his hands and prayed, "O my Lord! I am weak. You are All-mighty. Please help me out of this situation; I am worried that my mother wouldn't be able to take this, she is already ill. O Allah, please arrange for some food, and please make Ammi well again. Also do keep my Abbu fine wherever he is."

He stopped in front of his house only to find all his neighbours present. He got nervous because his mother wasn't feeling well in the morning. Oh God! It shouldn't be something worse! Khalid was shocked to see his mother standing besides his father! He forgot all the miseries he had to face for the past one month. Actually his father had lost his way by boarding a wrong bus. He had caught the bus going to another city instead of boarding the bus back home and fell asleep and was robbed. But now he was back and Khalid could study again and he thanked Allah Ta'ala.

Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ tests His servants but also rewards them handsomely.

The World's Most Difficult Question

Four university students wasted their whole day and did not study for the test that was planned for the coming day.

Next morning they all thought of a plan. They made themselves look as dirty and unusual as they could with grease and soil.

Then they went up to the teacher quite late to the scheduled time and told him that they had gone out to a wedding last night and on their return the tyre of their car burst and they had to push the car all the way back; and that they had no sleep and were in no condition to appear in the test. The teacher was a just person so he allowed them to give the test after three days. They said they would be ready by that time.

On that day, they appeared before the teacher. He said that there was a special condition for the test. All four were required to sit in separate classrooms for the test. They all agreed as they had prepared well in the last three days. The test consisted of two questions with a total of 100 marks.

The problem was that both questions were:

Q1. Write down your name. (2marks)
Q2. Which tyre burst? (98 marks)

Frogs and the City

Two frogs had lived in a village all their lives and used to hear about the big city from the cow, donkey and the camels that went there frequently. So they thought they should go and see the big city too.

They talked about it for a long time, but would decide against it because the city was more than ten miles away from the quiet and peaceful farm. At last they set off to see the city.

It was a hot day, and they soon began to feel tired. They had only gone a little way when one said to the other, "We must be nearly there. Can you see the city?"

"No," said the other frog; "but if I climb on your back I might be able to see it." So he climbed up on the back of the other frog to see the city.

Now when the frog put up his head, his eyes could only see what was behind, and not what was in front. So he saw the village they had just left. "Can you see the city?" asked the frog who was below. "Yes," answered the frog that had climbed up. "I can see it. It looks just like our village."

Then the frogs thought that it was not worthwhile going any farther. They went back and told the frogs round the village that they had seen the city, and it was just like theirs. But we all know very well that a big city is very different from a small farm. Many people do not want to work hard or they cannot understand other things so they simply declare that there is nothing special about it. We must not listen to such people and we should work hard.

The Mosquito and the Spider

Once upon a time, there was a forest full of animals. One fine day, at sunrise, a mighty roar shook the forest and awoke all the animals and birds.

A mosquito, which had taken refuge in the fur of a rat, woke up in alarm. It asked its friend, "What was that which has woken me up?"

The rat said, "It is the roar of a tiger. Perhaps, he was having a bad dream." The mosquito thought for a moment and said,

"I will teach him a lesson, which he will not forget for the rest of his life, for almost scaring the life out of me with his mighty voice."

The rat smiled at his little friend,

"You do not look so frightening that the tiger will get scared of you very easily."

"No problem," replied the mosquito. "I will show him that though I am small, my sting can be as sharp as a sword."

The rat merely shook its head, "It is all very well for you to say so, and if you are brave, then fly to the tiger and tell him to quit roaring and leave the forest instead of scaring all the other animals in the forest with his mighty roar." The mosquito accepted the challenge, and it flew up to the tiger. The buzzing sound of his wings immediately woke up the tiger, and he opened his eyes;

"Why are you annoying me? Don't you understand that I have not yet finished sleeping?"

The mosquito was extremely upset with the arrogant behaviour of the tiger and said, "I am the mosquito. How dare you roar in your sleep and

frighten all the animals and birds of this forest?" The tiger yawned and chomped his jaws and almost bit the mosquito. He said to him, "You little insect! Buzz off! Now, you are making me extremely angry!"

The mosquito was angry to hear the words of the tiger, and he decided that he would teach him a lesson that he would never forget for the rest of his life. He flew straight into one of the tiger's ears and started to sting it. This infuriated the tiger. He clapped his ear loudly with his paw hoping to scare the mosquito out of its ear, but he could not drive the mosquito away. The tiger tried everything... shaking his head violently from side to side hoping to get rid of the mosquito, but this made the mosquito bite only more harder. Finally, in desperation, the tiger cried out, "I give up and you win. I will stop roaring and leave this forest, but please get out of my ear."

The mosquito flew out of the tiger's ear, and the tiger ran for its life to get rid of this horrible insect, out of the forest into the neighbouring forest. All the animals of the forest saw him leaving the forest and congratulated the tiny mosquito for accomplishing this remarkable victory.

All the praise from the animals went straight to the head of the mosquito. He started boasting to other animals in the forest that had not seen the act about how he won the extraordinary victory over the mighty tiger. The mosquito soon found a spider on its web fast asleep after eating a big fly. Eagerly, the mosquito went up to the spider to give him the good news of how he got rid of the tiger.

The spider looked at his distinguished guest with respect. It invited the mosquito to sit on its carpet and tell him his amazing tale from the very beginning.

Flattered, the mosquito sat down on the web of the spider, and soon found that it was sticky and he was hopelessly caught in it. "Help me! My

legs are stuck in your carpet, and I cannot free myself." The spider chuckled at the mosquito's difficulty.

"That's right," he said, "it is a special carpet made for catching the easy to fool, talkative and boastful, like you!"

Perhaps, the end of the story seems a little sad. But after all, the mosquito himself was to blame for his end at the hands of the spider. The mosquito must have not heard that pride cometh before a fall, or perhaps it must have heard but forgot the lesson when it mattered most. Dear kids! Don't make the same mistake and be steadfast when things are good and when things are not good.

Short Stories (Part 3)

The Fortune Teller

A wizard, sitting in the marketplace, was telling the fortunes of the passers-by when a person ran up to him in great haste, and announced to him that the doors of his house had been broken open and that all his goods were being stolen. He sighed heavily and hastened away as fast as he could run. A neighbor saw him running and said, "Oh! You fellow there! You say you can foretell the fortunes of others; how is it you did not foresee your own?'

The Fox and Ms Cat

A fox was boasting to a cat of its clever devices for escaping its enemies. "I have a whole bag of tricks," he said, "which contains a hundred ways of escaping my enemies."

"I have only one," said the cat; "but I can generally manage with that." Just at that moment they heard the cry of a pack of hounds coming towards them, and the cat immediately scampered up a tree and hid herself in the branches.

"This is my plan," said the cat. "What are you going to do?" The fox thought first of one way, then of another, and while he was debating the hounds came nearer and nearer, and at last the fox in his confusion was caught up by the hounds and soon killed by the huntsmen. Miss cat, who had been looking on, said,

"Better one safe way than a hundred amongst which you cannot decide."

The Fox and the Goat

By an unlucky chance a fox fell into a deep well from which he could not get out. A goat passed by shortly afterwards, and asked the fox what he was doing down there.

"Oh, have you not heard?" said the fox. "There is going to be a great drought, so I jumped down here in order to be sure to have water by me. Why don't you come down too?" The goat thought well of this advice, and jumped down into the well. But the fox immediately jumped on her back, and by putting his foot on her long horns managed to jump up to the edge of the well.

"Good-bye, friend!" said the fox, "Remember next time, never trust the advice of one in difficulties."

A little in hand is worth more Than a Great Thing in Prospect

It happened that a fisherman, after fishing all day, caught only a little fish.

"Pray, let me go, master," said the fish. "I am much too small for your eating just now. If you put me back into the river I shall soon grow, then you can make a fine meal off me."

"Nay, nay, my little fish," said the fisherman, "I have you now. I may not catch you afterwards."

If Men Had All They Wished, They Would Often Be Ruined

A tortoise, lazily basking in the sun, complained to the sea birds of her hard fate, that no one would teach her to fly. An eagle, hovering nearby, heard her lamentation and demanded what reward she would give him if he would take her aloft and float her in the air.

"I will give you," she said, "all the riches of the red sea." "I will teach you to fly then," said the eagle; and taking her up in his talons he carried her almost to the clouds. Suddenly he let her go, and she fell on a lofty mountain, dashing her shell to pieces. The tortoise exclaimed in his moment of death,

"I have deserved my present fate; for what had I to do with wings and clouds, I who can with difficulty move about on the earth?'

No One Can Be a Friend If You Know Not Whether to Trust or Distrust Him

A hound having seen a hare on the hillside pursued her for some distance, at one time biting her with his teeth as if he would take her life, and at another fawning upon her, as if playing with another dog.

The hare said to him, "I wish you would act sincerely to me, and show yourself in your true colours. If you are a friend, why do you bite me so hard? If an enemy, why do you fawn on me?'

Dad's Blessings

A young man was getting ready to graduate from college. For many months he had admired a beautiful sports car in a dealer's showroom, and knowing his father could well afford it, he told him that was all he wanted.

As graduation day approached, the young man awaited signs that his father had purchased the car. Finally, on the morning of his graduation, his father called him into his private study. He told him how proud he was to have such a fine son, and told him how much he loved him. He handed his son a beautifully wrapped gift box. Curious, but somewhat disappointed, the young man opened the box and found a lovely, leather-

bound book, with the young man's name embossed in gold. Angry, he raised his voice to his father and said, "With all your money, you give me a book?" and stormed out of the house, leaving the book.

Many years passed and the young man was very successful in business. He had a beautiful home and a wonderful family, but realized that his father was very old, and thought perhaps he should go to him. He had not seen him since that graduation day. Before he could make arrangements, he received a telegram telling him his father had passed away, and willed the transfer of all of his possessions to his son. He needed to reach home immediately and take care of things.

When he arrived at his father's house, sudden sadness and regret filled his heart. He began to search through his father's important papers and saw that book, just as he had left it years ago. With tears, he opened the book and began to turn the pages. And as he did, a car key dropped from the back of the book. It had a tag with the dealer's name, the same dealer who had the sports car he had desired. On the tag was the date of his graduation, and the words PAID IN FULL.

How many times do we miss the blessings and answers to our prayers because they do not arrive exactly the way we had expected them to arrive?

A Traditional Saying

Every man, according to an ancient legend, is born into the world with two bags suspended from his neck. One bag in front full of his neighbours' faults, and a large bag behind filled with his own faults. Hence it is that men are quick to see the faults of others, and yet are often blind to their own failings.

Hate Doesn't End at Death

Two men, deadly enemies were sailing in the same vessel. Determined to keep as far apart as possible, one seated himself in the stern, and the other in the prow of the ship. A violent storm arose, and with the vessel in great danger of sinking, the one in the stern inquired of the captain which of the two ends of the ship would go down first. On his replying that he supposed it would be the prow, the man said,

"Death would not bring grief to me, if I could only see my enemy die before me."

Every Man for Himself

A great city was besieged, and its inhabitants were called together to consider the best means of protecting it from the enemy. A bricklayer earnestly recommended bricks as affording the best material for an effective resistance. A carpenter, with equal enthusiasm, proposed timber as a preferable method of defence. Upon which a currier stood up and said,

"Sirs, I differ from you altogether: there is no material for resistance equal to a covering of hides; and nothing so good as leather."

Abu Huraira رَضِیَ اللہُ تَعَالٰی عَنْہُ (Part 1)

From the early history of Islam to the present day, millions of Muslims have heard of Abu Huraira رَضِیَ اللہُ تَعَالٰی عَنْہُ. He passed on more than one thousand six hundred ahadith.

Tufayl Bin Amr رَضِیَ اللہُ تَعَالٰی عَنْہُ was a leader of the Daws, Abu Huraira's tribe. Tufayl helped Abu Huraira رَضِیَ اللہُ تَعَالٰی عَنْہُ become Muslim. The Daws Tribe lived along the Red Sea coast in southern Arabia.

After Tufayl رَضِیَ اللہُ تَعَالٰی عَنْہُ met the Prophet ﷺ and became a Muslim, he returned to his tribe and invited them to accept Islam. Abu Huraira ﷺ immediately became a Muslim. Most of the others were stubborn. It took them a long time to accept the new religion.

Abu Huraira رَضِیَ اللہُ تَعَالٰی عَنْہُ went to Makkah with Tufayl to meet the noble Prophet. The blessed Prophet رَضِیَ اللہُ تَعَالٰی عَنْہُ asked him, "What's your name?"

"Abd al-Shams, servant of the sun" replied Abu Huraira رَضِیَ اللہُ تَعَالٰی عَنْہُ.

"Instead, let your name be Abdal-Rahman, servant of the Merciful," said the Prophet رَضِیَ اللہُ تَعَالٰی عَنْہُ.

The name "Abu Huraira" was given as a nickname when he was a small boy. Abu Huraira رَضِیَ اللہُ تَعَالٰی عَنْہُ had a cat when he was a child. He loved cats. He always played with the cat. His friends called him Abu Huraira, 'father of the cats'. After that everyone called him Abu Huraira. His real name was almost forgotten. (Usd-ul-Gaba Abu Huraira: 259/3)

Abu Huraira رَضِیَ اللہُ تَعَالٰی عَنْہُ stayed with his tribe for several years after he became a Muslim. In the seventh year of the Hijrah he went to Madinah with some others from his tribe. He stayed in the masjid. He was single without a wife or child. His mother was with him. She was still a pagan. He prayed for her to become a Muslim. But she refused.

One day, he again invited his mother to believe in the One God and His Prophet. She answered with some bad words about the Prophet ﷺ. Abu Huraira رضي الله تعالى عنه went to the Prophet ﷺ with tears in his eyes. "Why are you crying, Abu Huraira?" asked the Prophet ﷺ.

"I always invite my mother to Islam, and she always refuses," said Abu Huraira رضي الله تعالى عنه. "I asked her again today. But she said some things about you that made me sad. Can you pray to Allah تبارك وتعالى for her to turn to Islam?"

The Prophet ﷺ prayed for Abu Huraira's ﷺ mother to accept Islam. When Abu Huraira رضي الله تعالى عنه went home, he found the door closed. He heard the splashing of water. He tried to enter the house, but his mother said, "Wait a minute. Don't come in yet." Then she got dressed and said, "You can come in now."

When Abu Huraira رضي الله تعالى عنه went inside, his mother said, "I declare that there is no god but Allah تبارك وتعالى and that Muhammad ﷺ is His Servant and Messenger."

Abu Huraira رضي الله تعالى عنه again went to the Prophet ﷺ crying. But this time his tears were tears of joy.

"I have good news, Rasulallah ﷺ," he said. "Allah تبارك وتعالى has answered your prayer and guided my mother to Islam."

(Muslim, Fazail-e-Sahaba, Hadith No. 4546)

Abu Huraira رضي الله تعالى عنه loved the Prophet ﷺ very deeply. He loved to look at Muhammad's ﷺ face. It shone like the sun. He often thanked God for his good fortune. He said:

Praise to Allah تبارك وتعالى who guided Abu Huraira رضي الله تعالى عنه to Islam.

Praise to Allah تبارك وتعالى who taught Abu Huraira the Qur'an.

Praise to Allah تبارك وتعالى who has given the companionship of Muhammad ﷺ.

Abu Huraira رضي الله تعالى عنه loved knowledge just as he loved the Prophet ﷺ.

Zayd bin Thabit رضي الله تعالى عنه, a companion, reported, "Abu Huraira رضي الله تعالى عنه, another friend, and I were supplicating in the masjid. The Prophet ﷺ came and sat down beside us. We stopped making dua. But the Prophet ﷺ told us to continue. So my friend and I prayed. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Ameen."

Then Abu Huraira رضي الله تعالى عنه prayed. He asked for what we asked. But he also asked for knowledge that would not be forgotten. The Prophet ﷺ again said, "Ameen."

Then we asked for knowledge that would not be forgotten, too. But the Prophet ﷺ said that the Daws youth asked first.

(Sunan-ul-Kubra: 441/3)

With his strong memory, Abu Huraira ﷺ set out to memorize all that he heard from the Prophet ﷺ. He didn't spend his time in the marketplace or working in the fields. So he was free to stay with the Prophet ﷺ and go on trips with him. Many companions were amazed by the many ahadith he knew. They would ask him a lot of questions about the ahadith.

Abu Huraira رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ تَعَالَىٰ عَنْهُ (Part 2)

Once Marwan bin Hakim wanted to test Abu Huraira رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ تَعَالَىٰ عَنْهُ's memory. He put a scribe behind a curtain to record whatever hadith Abu Huraira رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ تَعَالَىٰ عَنْهُ talked about. A year later he called Abu Huraira رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ تَعَالَىٰ عَنْهُ again and asked him to repeat the recorded hadith. He had not forgotten a single word. He said every single word again.

(Al-Mustadrak, Marifat-u-Sahabah, Hadith No. 6221)

Abu Huraira رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ تَعَالَىٰ عَنْهُ wanted others to gain knowledge as well. One day he was passing through the marketplace. He saw people busy buying and selling. He said, "People of Madinah, what a poor state you are in."

"What do you mean?" they asked.

"You are standing here," said Abu Huraira رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ تَعَالَىٰ عَنْهُ, "but the Prophet's ﷺ inheritance is being given out. Won't you take your share?"

"Where?" The people asked.

"In the masjid," replied Abu Huraira رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ تَعَالَىٰ عَنْهُ. The people quickly went to the masjid. Abu Huraira رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ تَعَالَىٰ عَنْهُ waited until they came back. "We went to the masjid," said some of the people. "But nothing was being given away."

Abu Huraira رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ تَعَالَىٰ عَنْهُ asked them, "Didn't you see anyone there?"

"Yes," they said. "We saw some people making salah, some others reading the Qur'an and some people learning halal and haram."

(Majma-u-Zawaid, Kitab-ul-Ilm, 71/1)

"Well, that's the inheritance of the Prophet رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ تَعَالَىٰ عَنْهُ!" replied Abu Huraira رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ تَعَالَىٰ عَنْهُ.

Abu Huraira رضي الله تعالى عنه spent most of his time learning. So he was often hungry. When he was very hungry, he would ask one of the companions about a hadith. He hoped the companion would take him to his home and give something to eat.

One day he was so hungry, he tied a stone to his stomach. Then he sat down where a companion might pass. First Abu Bakr رضي الله تعالى عنه walked by. Abu Huraira رضي الله تعالى عنه asked him about a hadith. But Abu Bakr رضي الله تعالى عنه didn't invite him to dinner.

Then Umar رضي الله تعالى عنه passed by. He asked Umar رضي الله تعالى عنه about a hadith. But Umar رضي الله تعالى عنه didn't invite him either.

Then the Prophet ﷺ passed by. He realized Abu Huraira رضي الله تعالى عنه was hungry. "Abu Huraira," called the Prophet ﷺ.

Abu Huraira رضي الله تعالى عنه answered, "Yes" and began to follow the Prophet رضي الله تعالى عنه. They went together to Muhammad ﷺ's house. The Prophet ﷺ saw a cup of milk and asked where it had come from. He learned someone had sent it to him. Then he said to Abu Huraira ﷺ, "Go and call the people at the masjid."

Abu Huraira رضي الله تعالى عنه went to call them. But he thought the milk wouldn't be enough for everyone.

The people staying at the masjid came and drank their fill. Then the Prophet ﷺ told Abu Huraira رضي الله تعالى عنه to drink. He drank until he couldn't hold anymore. Then the Prophet ﷺ drank his fill and finished the milk. (Fazail-e-Amaal, Hikayat-e-Sahaba, 54/1)

Abu Huraira رَضِیَ اللهُ تَعَالٰی عَنْهُ (Part 3)

Once, the Muslims received a lot of war booty. Abu Huraira رَضِیَ اللهُ تَعَالٰی عَنْهُ got his share of the wealth. He got a house, and he married and had children. But none of this changed him. He always remembered his poor days.

He would say, "I grew up as an orphan. I emigrated as a poor person. I used to serve Gazevan's daughter, Bushra. I served others when they stopped on the road. I drove the camels on the road. Then Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالٰى made it possible for me to marry Bushra. Praise be to Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالٰى Who has strengthened His religion and made me an imam."

Abu Huraira رَضِیَ اللهُ تَعَالٰی عَنْهُ spent much time in worship. He fasted during the day. He spent the first third of the night in prayer. Then he would wake his wife. She would spend the second third of the night in worship. Their servant would pray during the third part. So worship would continue all night long in his house. (Fazail-e-Amaal, Hikayat-e-Sahaba, 50/1)

During his caliphate, Umar رَضِیَ اللهُ تَعَالٰی عَنْهُ appointed Abu Huraira رَضِیَ اللهُ تَعَالٰی عَنْهُ as governor of Bahrain. Umar رَضِیَ اللهُ تَعَالٰی عَنْهُ was very careful about the type of person he appointed. He wanted his governors to live simply and frugally.

In Bahrain, Abu Huraira رَضِیَ اللهُ تَعَالٰی عَنْهُ became quite rich. Umar رَضِیَ اللهُ تَعَالٰی عَنْهُ heard about this and called him back to Madinah. "How did you become rich?" the Caliph رَضِیَ اللهُ تَعَالٰی عَنْهُ asked. "From breeding horses and the gifts I received," replied Abu Huraira رَضِیَ اللهُ تَعَالٰی عَنْهُ. "Hand it over to the treasury of the Muslims," ordered Umar رَضِیَ اللهُ تَعَالٰی عَنْهُ.

Abu Huraira رَضِیَ اللهُ تَعَالٰی عَنْهُ raised his hands towards the heavens and said, "O Lord, forgive the Amir of the Believers." He turned over his wealth. Later Umar رَضِیَ اللهُ تَعَالٰی عَنْهُ asked him to be governor again, but Abu Huraira رَضِیَ اللهُ تَعَالٰی عَنْهُ refused. (Euon-ul-Akhbar, Kitab-u-Sultan. 22/1)

Throughout his life, Abu Huraira رضي الله تعالى عنه was kind and courteous to his mother. Whenever he wanted to leave the house, he would stand at the door of her room and say, "Assalaamu alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuhu. May Allah تبارك وتعالى have mercy on you for taking care of me when I was a child."

His mother would return the greeting and say, "May Allah تبارك وتعالى have mercy on you for behaving well towards me even though you are grown up."

Abu Huraira رضي الله تعالى عنه always told others to be kind to their parents. One day he saw two men walking together. One was older than the other. He asked the younger one, "Who is this man?" "My father," the person replied.

"Don't call him by his name. Don't walk in front of him. Don't sit before he does," advised Abu Huraira رضي الله تعالى عنه.He died in the year 59 A.H. when he was seventy-eight years old.

Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud رضي الله تعالى عنه (Part 1)

Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud رضي الله تعالى عنه used to Prophet Muhammed ﷺ on his journeys and tended to his personal needs. He received the unique training and guidance in the household of the Prophet ﷺ. He is known and recognised as one of the most knowledgeable companions with knowledge of the Qur'an.

Once a man came to Umar Ibn Al Khattab رضي الله تعالى عنه and told him, "I have just come from Kufah in Iraq where I left a man filling copies of the Qur'an from memory".

"Who is he?" asked Umar رضي الله تعالى عنه angrily. "Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud رضي الله تعالى عنه," replied the man. Then Umar Mas'ud became calm and said, "Woe to you, by Allah تبارك وتعالى I don't know anyone more qualified to do this".

Another time, the Prophet ﷺ, Umar and Abu Bakr رضي الله تعالى عنهما passed the masjid while someone was reciting the Qur'an beautifully in prayer.

The Prophet رضي الله تعالى عنه said, "Whoever wants to read the Qur'an as fresh as it was revealed, should read like Ibn Mas'ud رضي الله تعالى عنه ", as he was the person reciting it. (Musand-e-Ahmed, Musand-ul-Ashara, 174/1 Hadith No. 170)

Ibn Mas'ud رضي الله تعالى عنه was one of the four people the Prophet رضي الله تعالى عنه recommended people to learn the Qur'an from; including Saalim Maula Abu Hudayfa, Muadh Ibn Jabal and Ubayy Ibn Ka'ab رضي الله تعالى عنهم.

(Musand-e-Ibn-e-Rahway, 33/1)

When the Sahabah رضي الله تعالى عنهم were very few in Makkah, weak and oppressed, one day they said, "The Quraysh have not heard the Qur'an being recited loudly. Who can do it?"

"I will do it" said Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud رضي الله تعالى عنه. This was a big task. The Sahabah were afraid for him because he did not have any tribe to

protect him. The Quraysh could easily attack and harm Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَىٰ عَنْهُ if he started to read the Qur'an for everyone to hear.

But Ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَىٰ عَنْهُ said, "Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ will keep me safe from their mischief". Ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَىٰ عَنْهُ went to the Kab'ah where some of the Quraysh had gathered and started reciting Surah Ar-Rahman of the Qur'an.

When the Quraysh realised he was reciting the Qur'an, they came over to him, and started beating him till he bled. However, although he was very swollen and bruised, he finished reciting the Surah.

The Sahabah were sorry for Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَىٰ عَنْهُ when they saw his condition, but Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَىٰ عَنْهُ said, "By Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ the enemies of Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ are more uncomfortable than me, and I would go and do it again." The sahabah رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَىٰ عَنْهُمْ said, "It is enough." (Marif-ul-Hadith, Kitab-ul-Manaqib, 382/8)

Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ (Part 2)

Ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ had excellent manners and he loved to make sacrifices for Allah's تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى sake. He took part in all the major battles of Islam with Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. In the battle of Badr, he killed Abu Jahl. (Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Maghazi, Hadith No. 3667)

He also fought in the battles of Uhud, Khandaq, Khaybar, the conquest of Makkah and Hunayn.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ was also very careful in narrating hadith from the Blessed Prophet ﷺ to make sure he said the exact words of the Prophet ﷺ, and didn't make any mistakes.

Once after telling people a hadith, he smiled after it, because Muhammed ﷺ also smiled after it. He knew that he said the hadith correctly, and that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was pleased. This shows us Ibn Mas'ud's رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ truthfulness and determination to be correct.

Ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ also never allowed injustice of any kind, no matter who was doing it. One day Wahid Ibn Aqaba, the governor of Kufa was late to lead the prayers in congregation, so Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ led the prayers.

When Ibn Aqaba came he was very angry and demanded an explanation from Ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ.

"Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى does not like the prayer delayed for you. Why should the people wait in the mosque for prayer whilst you are busy in your work?" replied Ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ. Wahid could not reply.

Ibn Mas'ud رَضِيَ اللهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ would treat his family with affection and kindness and made sure he educated them in the Qur'an and about Islam. He was very hospitable and in Kufah had emptied his house for serving guests.

His speeches were mainly about the Oneness of Allah تبارك وتعالى prayers, fearing Allah رضي الله تعالى عنه and the Hereafter. He used to say, "O people, he who wants this world loses the next, he who wants the Hereafter does not care about this world".

Ibn Mas'ud رضي الله تعالى عنه was brave and pious, though he was short and had very thin legs. One day he climbed a tree and his legs were uncovered and some people laughed at them.

But the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "On the Day of Judgement, his legs will have more weight in Allah's sight than Mount Uhud."

(Al-Tabkat-ul-Kubra, 155/3)

Ibn Mas'ud رضي الله تعالى عنه lived up to the time of the Khalifah Uthman رضي الله تعالى عنه. On Ibn Mas'ud's deathbed, Uthman came to visit him and said, "What is your illness?" "My sins," replied Ibn Mas'ud رضي الله تعالى عنه. "And what do you desire?" asked Uthman رضي الله تعالى عنه.

"The mercy of my Lord," replied Ibn Mas'ud رضي الله تعالى عنه.

"Should I give you your grant, which you have refused for years?" asked Uthman رضي الله تعالى عنه.

"I don't need it," said Ibn Mas'ud رضي الله تعالى عنه.

"Let it be for your daughters after you," replied Uthman رضي الله تعالى عنه.

"Do you fear that my children will become poor, Uthman رضي الله تعالى عنه? I have commanded them to read Surah al-Waqiah every night, for I have heard the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم saying: "Whoever reads al-Waqiah every night shall not be afflicted with poverty, ever."

(Tafsir-e-Ibn-e-Kasir, 281/4, Surat-ul- Waqia, 1)

That night Ibn Mas'ud passed away رضي الله تعالى عنه, his tongue moist with remembrance of Allah and recitation of the Qur'an.

The Clever Daughter

Many years ago in a small Indian village, a farmer had the misfortune of owing a large sum of money to a village moneylender.

The moneylender, who was old and ugly, took a fancy to the farmer's beautiful daughter. So he proposed a bargain. He said he would forgo the farmer's debt if he could marry his daughter to him. Both the farmer and his daughter were horrified by the proposal.

So the cunning money-lender suggested that they let providence decide the matter. He told them that he would put a black pebble and a white pebble into an empty money bag. Then the girl would have to pick one pebble from the bag.

If she picked the black pebble, she would become his wife and her father's debt would be forgiven.

If she picked the white pebble she need not marry him and her father's debt would still be forgiven.

But if she refused to pick a pebble, her father would be thrown into jail.

They were standing on a pebble strewn path in the farmer's field. As they talked, the moneylender bent over to pick up two pebbles. As he picked them up, the sharp-eyed girl noticed that he had picked up two black pebbles and put them into the bag. He then asked the girl to pick a pebble from the bag.

Now, imagine that you were standing in the field. What would you have done if you were the girl?

There were only three possibilities.

1. The girl should refuse to take a pebble.

2. The girl should show that there were two black pebbles in the bag and expose the money-lender as a cheat.

3. The girl should pick a black pebble and sacrifice herself in order to save her father from his debt and imprisonment.

Well, here is what she did....

The girl put her hand into the moneybag and drew out a pebble. Without looking at it, she fumbled and let it fall onto the pebble-strewn path where it immediately became lost among all the other pebbles.

"Oh, how clumsy of me," she said. "But never mind, if you look into the bag for the one that is left, you will be able to tell which pebble I picked."

Since the remaining pebble was black, it was assumed that she had picked the white one. And since the money-lender dared not admit his dishonesty, the girl changed what seemed an impossible situation into an extremely advantageous one.

Life is not a bed of roses, but a smart person is one who thinks out of the box and puts his trust in Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَىٰ to safely pass the ill winds. And anyway, deceit may see victories in battles but it is only the truth that wins the war.

Einstein and His Driver

When Albert Einstein was on a speech tour he usually found himself eagerly longing to get back to his laboratory work. One night as they were driving to yet another speech and dinner, Einstein mentioned to his driver that he was tired of speechmaking. The driver coincidentally resembled Einstein very closely.

"I have and idea, boss," his driver said. "I've heard you give this speech so many times. I'll bet I could give it for you." Einstein fancied the idea and laughed loudly saying, "Why not? Let's do it! This is your night my dear."

When they arrive at the dinner, Einstein put on the driver's cap and jacket and sat in the backroom. The driver gave a beautiful performance of Einstein's speech and even answered a few questions expertly.

Then a very proud and arrogant professor asked an extremely difficult question about anti-matter formation, deviating here and there to let everyone in the audience know that he was nobody's fool.

Without missing a beat, the driver answered the professor with a cold stare and said, "Sir, the answer to that question is so simple that I will let my driver, who is sitting at the back, answer it."